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Henry Morrells.

From his affectionate
Aunt Sarah. & Maria



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BEAUTIES OF JEREMY TAYLOR.





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JEREMY TAYLOR,

BISHOP OF DOWN CONNOR AND DROMORE.

From an Original Painting in All Souls College Oxford

Published by Blackie Fullarton & Co. Glasgow.

THE
BEAUTIES
OF
JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.
BISHOP OF DOWN, CONNOR, AND DROMORE.

SELECTED FROM HIS WORKS.

WITH
AN ESSAY ON HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY THE
REV. JOHN BROWN PATTERSON,
MINISTER OF FALKIRK.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

THE Works of Jeremy Taylor, 'THE SHAKSPEARE OF DIVINES,' have long been admired for comprehensiveness of thought, eloquence of expression, beauty of imagery, and fervour of devotional feeling. They, indeed, claim the very first place in the libraries of all who hold in reverence the great principles of Christian Piety and Religious Freedom; who love our language in its purest and richest melody; and who value that essential spirit of elevated poetry which so eminently distinguishes them. But the voluminous and expensive form in which they have hitherto been published—the oldest editions being in six volumes, folio, and the latest, that of Bishop Heber, (1822) in fifteen volumes, octavo—renders them inaccessible to numbers who are well qualified to appreciate their merits. The publishers, therefore, deem no apology necessary for introducing into "The Christian's Family Library" a volume *selected* from these Works, so that the humblest reader may be enabled to enjoy their many beauties, and be edified by their impressive eloquence. For the manner in which the Selection is executed, the Publishers would only refer to the name of the gentleman, by whom the volume is compiled, as a sufficient guarantee for its excellence.

The learning, genius, and piety, the zeal, toleration, and humility, and the eminently Christian spirit of this great and excellent prelate, have been so often extolled, that it may almost seem a matter of supererogation to introduce any testimonies here; but lest there should be any whose attention has not yet been directed towards his writings, a few quotations from the works of distinguished critics may here be given.

"This great prelate," says the Bishop of Dromore (in a funeral sermon,) "had the good humour of a gentleman, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, the wisdom of a counsellor, the sagacity of a prophet, the reason of an angel, and the piety of a saint: he had devotion enough for a cloister, learning enough for a university, and wit enough for a college of virtuosi: and had his parts

and endowments been parcelled out among his poor clergy that he left behind him, it would, perhaps, have made one of the best dioceses in the world."

"Few have equalled Bishop Taylor," says Dr Parr in his Letter to Milner, "in variety of learning, in fertility of imagination, in vigour of thinking, in rectitude of intention, and holiness of life. His controversial writings, fraught as they are with guileless ardour, with peerless eloquence, and with the richest stores of knowledge, historical, classical, scholastic, and theological, may be considered as irrefragable proofs of his pure, affectionate, and dutiful attachment to the Reformed Church of England."

"Taylor and Barrow," says Bishop Hurd, "were incomparably the greatest preachers and divines of their age. But my predilection is for Taylor. He has all the abundance and solidity of the other, with a ray of lightning of his own, which, if he did not derive it from Demosthenes and Tully, has at least as generous and noble an original."

"Often has my mind," says Bishop Warburton, "hung with fondness and admiration over the crowded, yet clear and luminous galaxies of imagery diffused through the works of Bishop Taylor."

"It can hardly be doubted," says Bishop Middleton of Calcutta, in his sermons, "that our more extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures, with the history of other and better times, and with the writings of such men as Jeremy Taylor, will enable us to distinguish the everlasting truths of the Gospel from the errors of a fleeting enthusiasm."

"We will venture to assert," says a writer in the Edinburgh Review (No. 36) "that there is in any one of the prose folios of Jeremy Taylor more fine fancy and original imagery, more brilliant conceptions, and glowing expressions—more new figures, and new applications of old figures—more, in short, of the body and the soul of poetry, than in all the odes and the epics that have since been produced in Europe."

"When the name of Jeremy Taylor," says Mr Hazlitt, "is no longer remembered with reverence, genius will have become a mockery, and virtue an empty shade."

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,	ix	Spirit of God a Spirit of joy,	68
Terror of the wicked at the day of judgment,	1, 6	Means employed by God for deterring men from sin,	69
Instances of the change of men's opinions at the day of judgment,	10	God a jealous God,	71
Success of a good man's prayers hindered by anger,	12	Sins of fathers visited upon children,	73
Success of prayer hindered by lukewarmness,	13	God glorified by the sinner's repentance,	77
Exposition of the latter part of Hebrews xii.,	15	Vanity of earthly confidences,	78
Use and abuse of the principle of fear in religion,	16	Weakness of the human heart,	80
Perverseness of sinners,	18	The heart's deceitfulness in judging its own spiritual state,	81
Effects of sickness on the mind,	19	The heart's deceitfulness in respect to its resolutions,	83
Faith,	19, 380	Voluntary blindness of the human heart,	86
Devotion,	22	Pride,	89
Necessity of cultivating temperance and chastity,	23	Relation between suffering and piety at different periods,	90
Three states of man, nature, grace, and glory,	24	Christ the exemplar of suffering,	92
"My soo, give me thine heart,"	26	Sufferings of the apostles and primitive Christians,	95
Description of some who begin to run well, and then are hindered,	27	Sufferings of Christians in an age of religious liberty and peace,	97
Fervour in prayer necessary,	28	Ends of divine providence in the saints' afflictions,	98
Persevering zeal,	29	The Christian's safety in time of distress,	101
Delight in God's service,	30	The Christian's affliction followed by glory,	101
Frequency in prayer necessary,	31	Mercy of the divine judgments,	103
Zeal to be united with charity,	33	Primitive and modern Christian profession contrasted,	104
Epicure's proverb,	35	The more devout observance of the means of grace a proof of growth in grace,	106
Madness of intemperance,	36	Watchfulness against the least sin a proof of growth in grace,	107
Celibacy and marriage compared,	37	Ability to resist present temptation a proof of growth in grace,	108
Common duties of husband and wife,	38	Resistance of sudden temptation a proof of growth in grace,	109
A husband and father's love to his family,	41	Sin to be resisted in its beginnings,	110
Adorning of the soul recommended to wives,	41	No man forced to sin,	111
Household and family of sin,	42	Case of single acts of sin interrupting a holy life,	114
Pleasures of sin,	42	Imaginations of sin dangerous,	115
Shamefulness of sin,	49	The foolish exchange,	116
Silence and conversation compared,	50	Christian prudence shown in selecting eternal life as the chief pursuit,	137
Foolish talking, or stultiloquy,	52	Christian prudence shown in using fit means for securing eternal life,	138
Jestings which are not convenient,	53		
Revealing of secrets,	56		
Profane swearing,	57		
Speech to be employed for the consolation of the sorrowful,	58		
Cautions how to hear sermons,	59		
Connexion between the gospel and the Spirit,	63		
Custody of the Spirit the best freedom,	66		
Spirit's influence in weaning the heart from worldly pleasures,	67		

	PAGE	PAGE
Instances of God's concern for the salvation of souls,	140	Against envy, 389
Modern pretenders to inspiration,	141	Against anger, 390
Christian simplicity in making and performing promises,	142	Preparation for the Lord's Supper, 391
Miracles of the divine mercy,	145	Prayers for several occasions, 397
Way of understanding,	172	Vanity and shortness of life, 423
Resurrection of the body,	187	Rules for lengthening our days, 431
Death and immortality,	195	Miseries of man's life 437
Character of Frances, countess of Carberry,	205	Death of the righteous and the wicked, 442
Literal and spiritual sense of Scripture,	211	Advantages of sickness, 445
Preparation for death,	216	Rules and exercises whereby your sickness may be sanctified, 453
The moral law as expounded by nature, by Moses, and by Christ,	218	The practice of patience, 457
Exhortation to imitate Christ's life,	242	Acts of patience by way of prayer and ejaculation, 461
Retired and private piety,	250	Practice of faith in sickness, 466
The birth of Jesus,	251	Acts of faith for the sick under temptation, 469
Rules for the conduct of devout meditation,	252	Acts of repentance for old men and for all in sickness, 471
Death of the innocents, and flight of Jesus into Egypt,	259	Offices for the minister's use in visiting the sick, 475
Comparative advantages of solitude and society for cultivating holiness,	266	Contingencies and treatings of departed friends in order to burial, &c., 481
Temptation,	269	Defence of religious toleration, 486
Faith a practical principle,	284	The obedience of faith, 503
Jesus' conference with the woman of Samaria,	288	Rashness of the ancient church in imputing heresy, 503
The eight beatitudes,	293	Mixture of simplicity and purity in Holy Writ, 510
Duelling,	305	Authority of councils to determine controversies, 510
Prayer,	308	Against religious persecution, 515
A holy life more free from trouble than a course of sin,	322	Practice of Christian churches towards persons disagreeing, &c., 523
Christ's preparation for his passion,	324	Whether it be lawful for a prince to tolerate several religions, 526
Proper manner of receiving the Holy Sacrament,	332	Intercommunicating with churches of different persuasions, 529
Events occurring on the evening of the passion,	341	Nature of cumulative proof illustrated by the evidence of Christianity, 531
Crucifixion of Jesus,	347	Nature, offices, and measures of friendship, &c. 552
Practice of the presence of God,	353	
Contentedness in all estates and accidents,	358	
Charity, or the love of God,	383	
Reading or hearing the word of God,	387	

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

“Now they do it,” says the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, “to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.” 1 Cor. ix. 25. But who are they? and what is it that they do? The persons alluded to are those who engaged as combatants in the games of ancient Greece. These celebrated games, which consisted in the competition of the candidates for fame before a vast assemblage from every corner of the land, in exercises of bodily strength, and swiftness, and skill, and prowess, were held at different places of the Greek confederation, at different intervals of time. Among the most celebrated of them all, were those which took place every four years in the immediate neighbourhood of Corinth, and, from the isthmus on which that city is situated, bore the name of the Isthmian games; and hence we perceive with what propriety and beauty the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, borrows his illustrations, in the passage we have quoted, from the circumstances of the gymnastic contests for which their vicinity was famous; and how readily they would comprehend the allusion it contains, to the long course of labour and of self-denial by which the champions were wont to prepare themselves for competition and for triumph. For this end the apostle tells us they were “temperate in all things,”—they exerted an habitual self-command; they kept in check every desire, they denied themselves every indulgence, they abstained from every employment, they rejected every luxury, which might tend to enervate their vigour, or clog their agility, or tame their fiery courage. They observed a stated regimen; they trained themselves by laborious exercise; they used a thousand painful and distasteful arts to brace their sinews, and sharpen their perceptions, and mature their skill; they kept their bodies under, and brought them into subjection; they parted with their very freedom for a time, and resigned themselves as slaves to the direction and control of some master of athletic arts, under whose iron discipline they had many things to do, and many to endure,—to become patient of cold and heat, and hunger and thirst, and watching and painfulness, and weariness, and all but intolerable hardships. To a training thus toilsome and intense, the Corinthians knew that the children of the noblest commonwealths of Greece, the kings and princes of her hundred colonics, were wont to submit themselves without repining or regret, with all the entireness and alacrity of voluntary choice. Nor did their labours terminate here. All this was but prelude

and preparation. We have yet to survey the crowning struggle, in comparison of which all the action and endurance that preceded was but the sport of children. Then what prodigies of efforts might we behold!—what straining of faculties to their utmost pitch of exertion and resistance!—what eagerness of emulation!—what blazing ardour of courage!—what steadfast might of patience!—what breathlessness, and dust, and sweat, and tumult, and hope and fear, and long repelled defeat, and dearly purchased victory! Perhaps we cannot form a more striking or a more correct idea of the incredible energy which formed the whole spirit of what an ancient poet therefore calls the “Isthmian labour,” than by remembering that the word which properly signifies competition in the games of Greece has been adopted in another sense into our tongue, and that that word is “agony.”

These then are they of whom the apostle speaks, and this is what they do. And why? Wherefore all this preparatory toil and self-constraint, and slavery and suffering? Wherefore this immense expenditure of active and of passive energy in the actual knot and strain of competition? It is that “they may obtain a corruptible crown;” that the victor may bind his brow with a wreath of laurel, or, as was the practice at the Isthmian festival, of pine; garlands which, though of evergreens, yet soon waxed sere and red, and drooped, and shed their leaves, and mouldered into dust. True, indeed, the fading garland formed to the eager and emulous spirits of the Grecian youth, not so much the reward itself, as the symbol of the reward for which they panted. That reward consisted chiefly in the honour which adorned the conqueror’s name, and not his forehead; in the admiring gaze of congregated Greece; in the applauding shouts which rent the air from that vast multitude, as glowing and panting from the victorious strife, and soiled with not dishonourable dust, the youthful conqueror advanced to receive the hard-won chaplet; in the accents of triumphal music which hailed his success, and the strains of prevailing poets which promised to bear his name upon the wings of song to distant climes and distant generations. Yet was it all a perishable glory he thus obtained, almost as brief and fading as the laurel on his brow. The fickle breath of popular applause soon veered and shifted round; in the full tumult of acclamation the tones of envy and of jealousy were heard mingling,—perhaps the more distinctly from the discord which they made,—the aspiring nature within felt, even while the applause continued, that it was not worth the price that had been paid for it,—that it could not fill the soul as it had filled the ear; before long the last echoes died away into silence, and before much longer into oblivion. Another name filled the mouths of the multitude and the trumpet of renown; and such immortality as bards had promised vanished into an idle dream,—the veriest illusion which ever fascinated to mock the soul of man. So that with respect to the glory as well as to the verdure which made the Isthmian chaplet seem so bright and

beautiful, so worthy an object of ambition and pursuit, the apostle could emphatically exclaim, "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown."

With the case thus described of a competitor in the Isthmian labour, pursuing with such eagerness and exertion a perishable reward, the apostle contrasts that of a Christian pursuing, by somewhat of the same means, a reward that is imperishable. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

The earthly preparation of the Christian for the inheritance above bears, in many respects, a strong resemblance, and is therefore frequently compared in Scripture to the training and the contest of an Olympic combatant. It is true the Christian is not allowed to look to his future glory as, simply and strictly speaking, the reward of his own exertions or his own endurance; the result of these in precisely the same way in which it might be said of the victorious competitor for the pine wreath or the laurel, that he had merited his glory,—that he had earned his crown. It is not our business at present to explain very much at large the consistency of the two different views which Scripture gives us of the celestial inheritance; sometimes representing it as "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and sometimes as a prize to be "sought by patient continuance in well-doing." Suffice it to observe, that while the doctrine of human merit is equally indefensible on the principles of reason and of revelation; while from the justice of heaven, man, viewed in himself, deserves nothing at any stage of his existence but punishment; still it is obvious that the Sacred writers show no reluctance to employ the terms "reward" and "recompense," in reference to the future glory of the saints. Nor are such terms, even when we keep in mind the great fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that "we are saved by grace," unmeaning or obscure. We must recollect that the reward itself is not of debt but of grace; that it is that to which, previous to the promise, no man could have advanced a claim, and which, even after the promise, no man can secure without the aids of God's renewing and sanctifying Spirit. Yet still there are many circumstances connected with the eternal felicity prepared for believers, on account of which it is appropriately described by the name of reward. Heaven is the Christian's reward, inasmuch as it is inseparably connected with his sanctification. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heaven is the Christian's reward, inasmuch as it will be bestowed expressly as a mark of God's approbation of the conduct to which it is annexed. "Well done," is the blissful invitation with which the saint is welcomed to Paradise, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; be thou ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Heaven is the Christian's reward, because its glories and felicities will be dispensed to him in proportion to the degree of faithful service rendered by him here to the Lord and his Anointed; in proportion to his "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." "Every

man shall receive according to his own labour." He that gains five talents in trading for his Lord, shall have the rule of five cities in the celestial commonwealth; he that hath gained ten, shall be viceroy over ten. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, but he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

In the doctrine of rewards, thus understood—while there is nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of grace—there is much that is fitted to call out and stimulate to eager exertion all those powers and principles of our being which take aim at our own felicity and interest, and to enlist them on the side of a high and generous and energetic Christianity; and we are authorized by the frequent exhortations and the recorded examples both of saints and of the King of saints—of Moses, for example, whose eulogy it is, that he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward"—or of Jesus, whose conduct in this particular is expressly proposed for our imitation, that, "for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame," to consider eternal glory as so connected with present holiness, that encouragement and impulse to the cultivation of the latter may, at all times, be legitimately derived from the anticipation of the former—even as the preparations and the struggles of the Olympic or Isthmian candidates were animated and upheld by the distant prospect or the nearer view of the triumphal crown. Now that course of earthly holiness which comprehends the Christian's training and his actual struggle for the prize, is one which, *if pursued as Scripture requires it to be pursued*, presents the occasion, nay, makes the demand, of an exhibition of vigour and self-government, and zeal, and energy, and patience, much resembling that required of old from the candidates for glory in the Grecian games. If we would pursue a course of Christian holiness, such as Holy Writ requires, we must "deny ungodliness and worldly passions, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world;" we must "deny ourselves and take up our cross;" we must "exercise ourselves unto godliness;" we must, as the apostle—the very apostle who climbed the loftiest height of holiness ever ascended by mere man, felt himself continually constrained to do—"keep under the body and bring it into subjection," habituating every inclination to submit to the control of those great aims and principles of which the end is heaven—"being temperate in all things"—rejecting all indulgences which, either from their nature or their degree, are fitted to pollute the purity, to impair the energy, to deaden the alacrity, to check the growth, of that new and spiritual principle which has been breathed into our natures by the Holy Ghost. We must "mortify the deeds of the body;" we must "make no provision to fulfill its deceitful passions;" we must "crucify it with its affections and its lusts." We must continually view ourselves in the character, and act in the spirit of champions vowed to an achievement which claims for its successful accomplishment the utmost vigour of our faculties—the entire devotion of our natures; as those who have an arduous race to run, a difficult war to

wage. We must "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us;" we must "take to us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places." And while our general course as Christians must thus be one of habitual vigilance, and self-denial, and exertion, and devotion to one great selected end, we must look for occasions on which we shall be called to put forth more eager efforts, to endure more furious assaults, to accomplish a more arduous resistance, than usual. There are occasions in the life of most Christians when, if they would remain faithful to their character and calling, they must pass through an agony distinguished from the tenor of their ordinary spiritual existence, somewhat as the closing strife on the arena was from the course of continued exercises which formed the athlete's education for victory—occasions, when the great antagonist of the believer, perceiving some combination of outward circumstances in the Christian's lot, or of inward movements in the Christian's mind, peculiarly adapted to further his malignant views, attacks him with subtler device or more furious onset than usual, throws him back upon his last resources, and reduces him, as it were, to the uttermost extremity. Yet even on these occasions it is required of the Christian to sustain the contest manfully, and to terminate it victoriously. There is no danger of defeat if he only use the means of resistance in his reach; if, "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," which how to obtain in the hour of need he knows, he persevere in wielding aright the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith. But the use of these means, the management of these arms, so as to overcome at last, is what will demand, most probably, an intensity of effort and a patience of suffering, a steadfast resolution and a fervid zeal, which may be not unaptly likened to those required of the Grecian combatant, when, firmly planting the foot and stretching the nostril wide, in the crisis and agony of decisive struggle, he poured out all the energies of body and of soul in one determined grasp at victory.

It is to be feared that, in all this description, many will feel as if there were something stretched and strained; something even ludicrously inconsistent with reality and with experience, as if we had been driven, by want of living models, to delineate from fancy, in order to make the thing compared—the Christian life—at all correspond to the thing with which it is compared—the Isthmian labour. But no; we have been drawing not from fancy, but from the Bible. Every part of the preceding description is sustained by most certain warrant of Holy Writ—the greater portion of it is expressed in the very words of Holy Writ themselves. What, therefore, is the conclusion to be drawn from the apparent contrast between the character of personal religion as the Bible describes it, and that of personal

religion as professing Christians exhibit it, in respect of the self-denying, self-exhausting energy which the Scriptures require—and of the easy self-indulgent feebleness which our Christian characters display? What, but that, in very many cases, there is too much reason to doubt the genuineness of that religion altogether which resembles so little the standard and model of true religion in the oracles of God. What, but that, in all cases, we have but too much cause to apprehend, that even if ours be a genuine, it is only an infant Christianity—that we must be content to be “saved as by fire,” instead of having “ministered to us an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The consideration should excite us every one diligently to consider in what respects our Christian walk and conflict may be accommodated more exactly to the statements and the requisitions of our Lord—and, instead of repining that our condition and our calling, rightly understood, summon us to more painful sacrifices, and more arduous labours, and more perilous contests, than we have hitherto imagined, we should rejoice to have so discovered the possibility of verifying more distinctly in our experience the scriptural import of the name we bear, and of so preparing to occupy a sublimer and a happier place among those who, having continued “faithful unto death,” shall inherit the “crown of life.”

But while this is the course to which our God and Saviour has summoned the Christian who wishes to walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith he is called, he has not been so unmindful of our nature and necessities as to address to us a bare call to arduous duty, unfortified with motives and encouragements of appropriate strength. These motives, as propounded in Scripture, are very numerous and very powerful. Nor is that the least lofty and spirit-stirring, which the apostle presents, when, under the image of “an incorruptible crown,” we are reminded of “the glory, and honour, and immortality,” reserved “for those who seek, by patient continuance in well doing, eternal life.” We have seen already what power was exerted of old in developing energy, in stimulating exertion, and upholding resolution, by the prospect of an attainment which consisted in nothing more precious or more durable than a wreath of quickly withering leaves, or the shout of a multitude’s applause. Oh, then, what power should not be exerted over the believer’s mind, by the anticipation of the glorious and incorruptible crown laid up in heaven for him that overcometh in the Christian combat. That glorious crown, woven by the hands of angels, is, as the apostle Peter calls it, “an amaranthine garland,” not composed of the fading foliage or the vanishing flowers of earth, but from the flowers and trees which shade the river of life in the eternal paradise of God; the symbol of perpetual honour—perpetual purity—perpetual joy, and, therefore, known in the Bible by three majestic appellations, composed, as it were, of three resplendent circlets—“the crown of glory”—“the crown of righteousness”—“the crown of life.” Nor shall

the coronation of the Christian, any more than that of the Isthmian victor, be without the applauses of illustrious beholders. "A cloud of witnesses" hovers around and over the amphitheatre of life, who, now spectators of the agony, shall be hereafter of the recompense, when he who has "denied himself and taken up his cross, and followed Christ," shall be confessed and crowned by the illustrious Captain of salvation, before his Father, and before his holy angels; yea, before the assembled and admiring universe. Oh, what compared with the approbation then to be expressed of those who have "fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith"—by God and by his holy ones—the sages, the dignitaries, the heroes of creation—were the acclamations that at Corinth or elsewhere were thundered from assembled Greece, though all her children, of all ages, renowned for wisdom and for valour, had been gathered into one, and swelled with their voices the general shout; or what were the melody to the conqueror's ear of the triumphal clarion, or Pindar's burning lyre hymning his praise to generations, compared with that enrapturing voice which is heard proceeding from the throne, and saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" And then, what a crowning blessedness to think that all this glorious triumph is not the triumph of a single day, but the commencement of one which stretches throughout eternity—never decaying—for ever brightening; that the diadem of the Christian conqueror is "the wreath that fadeth not away!" Throughout the lapse of ages, the revolution of cycles, the history of worlds, the endlessness of eternity, upon his head the crown shall flourish, its amaranthis perpetually fresh, its jewels perpetually blazing, "even as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

Now let us mark the end for which this magnificent prospect is held out to Christians. Plainly to stimulate them to vigour and to energy in the pursuit of things eternal. There is obviously implied in the apostle's remark the exhortation which, in another place, he has subjoined to his description of "the glory that is to be revealed:" "Wherefore, beloved brethren, be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." In the passage now before us, however, the sentiment, although the same in substance, has a peculiar force and point imparted to it by the striking reference which it contains to the proved efficiency of a similar motive, in stimulating worldly men to worldly effort. If the hope of winning a meed of fame so brief, so worthless, call forth in the breasts of men such energy of passion, such energy of action, such energy of endurance, capable, if rightly directed, of "taking the kingdom of heaven by storm;" what, oh what, might be expected to be the amount of force imparted to the Christian's character for discharging duty, and enduring trial, by the believing and habitual contemplation of "the joy set before him"—"the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give

him at that day !”—Alas ! how utterly inadequate to what might reasonably be expected, is the effect which, in point of fact, we feel thus produced upon ourselves, we see produced on others, though they and we are professing to “look for such things.” How far inferior the energy with which we pursue eternal objects, in comparison of that with which worldly men seek “the things that perish in the using.” Perhaps, after all the explanations we have given, the instance hitherto referred to may be to most minds too remote and unfamiliar to be anything like so impressive an example of energy directed by earthly men to earthly objects, as it undoubtedly was to the Corinthians at first, accustomed as they had been from infancy to the spectacle to which St Paul so learnedly and happily appeals. But if we do not feel very strongly the force of this particular example, we have only to look round us, and we shall find others, by hundreds, in forms which will come more directly home to our business and bosoms, in the town and in the country, in the fields and the shops, in the houses and the streets. We may fix almost at random on any one of our acquaintance distinctly embarked in any worldly enterprise, which is, or which he imagines of importance to his worldly welfare and enjoyment,—pursuing a definite object of ambition and desire; and if we will but calculate the quantity of thought, and feeling, and care, and trouble, and self-denial, and general exertion of body and of mind which he expends, it may be, upon some very common-place end and aim connected with this brief existence; and then compare it with the amount of corporeal and mental action which we—professing Christians—devote to those grand eternal realities, in comparison of which we profess to believe that all the world inherits is but as the small dust of the balance—alas ! with what regret and confusion of face shall we discover how disproportionate, in respect of power, to the motive which the follower of the world derives from the corruptible, is that which the so called follower of Jesus draws from the incorruptible. From the man who earns by the labour of to-day to-morrow’s meal, up to him whose ambition grasps at sceptres, almost every living man is, in respect of the comparative steadiness, and vigour, and decision of his aims and endeavours, a living reprover of the feeble, interrupted, indecisive character of much modern Christianity. It will be well if we often make this comparison, humbling and mortifying as it is, that the rebuke so administered to our deficiencies may have the effect of more strongly stirring up our energies; that we may labour to adjust the intensity of our regards, and the vigour of our pursuits, more truly to the comparative value and duration of those things which are “seen and temporal,” and those which are “not seen and eternal;” that we may be excited more deeply to feel the spirit, and to imitate the conduct of the great apostle, when he said, “Every one who striveth for the mastery governeth himself in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight

I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, after having been a herald unto others, I myself should be a rejected candidate." *There* was a man who exhibited something like the character of a candidate for heaven; of one who lived and breathed, and moved under "the powers of the world to come;" who, from the moment of his first devotion to the Christian course and conflict, habitually made success in that arduous but noble achievement the great end and object of his being; reckoned no sacrifice too costly to be made, no labour too difficult to be undergone, no suffering too painful to be endured, which should promote his fitness for fulfilling the enterprise, his meetness for enjoying the reward; "yea, counted not his own life dear unto him, if so he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord." Be it henceforward the care of all who profess to be candidates for heaven, to be followers of him as he was a follower of Christ. So shall we enjoy a better hope of joining at last in the exulting song, which, when there lay before him but one struggle more, the bitterest but the last, ere he should "lay hold upon eternal life," and have his victor forehead garlanded with immortality, the champion apostle poured forth in clear and solemn melody from under death's impending shadow; while the block, the dark altar of demon idolatry, was already prepared to drink his blood, and the axe of Nero's lictors gleamed with a ghastly glitter on his eye; when, in one word, he saw frowning before him a martyr's death, and sparkling above him a martyr's crown;—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not unto me only, but to all those who love his appearing."

The views of the Christian life which we have thus stated and illustrated are those which beyond all others are the favourites of Jeremy Taylor. No one can read his writings without being struck with the passion, so to speak, for holiness which breathes and glows through almost every page; and that a holiness not such as is too often dignified with the name, indolent, passive, negative, a course of easy self-indulgent piety that exacts no sacrifice, and demands no effort worthy to be so denominated, but a holiness of strenuous exertion and difficult endurance, a race, a warfare, an agony. Meanwhile the grand ruling motive to which, in enforcing the practice of this self-denied and hard-wrought holiness he is accustomed to appeal, is that which the prospect of the incorruptible crown supplies, that which the apostle calls "having respect unto the recompense of the reward." We have already endeavoured to show that, in so far, our author's conception of what Christian holiness really is, and his use of the motive derived from the prospect of future reward, are both of them in themselves legitimate and scriptural. But it cannot be denied, and it

ought not to be concealed, that he is accustomed in the general tenor of his works to dwell upon these views much too exclusively, and to express them on particular occasions much too unguardedly. We miss in his writings that vast and beautiful variety of impulse and inducement which the Word of God presents: and feel the perpetual illustration and enforcement of the one favourite motive, notwithstanding the endless diversity of forms and hues in which it is arranged by his exhaustless fancy, at length become monotonous and heavy; not to speak of the startling and offensive audacities of expression which too often totter on the very verge, and occasionally rush headlong over the precipice, of sheer legality. In undertaking the duty, when proposed to him, of selecting a volume of extracts from the voluminous works of this extraordinary man, the Editor had hopes at first of being able to compile a volume more free from such incautious statements than in the progress of the work he found to be possible; and he has now therefore to entreat of his readers that they will be cautious in the perusal of the following extracts to separate between the mass of precious ore and the admixtures occasionally occurring of baser materials; that they will be upon their guard against every statement and every expression which shall seem to represent human works as in any degree the meritorious cause of human salvation; and that they will trust our author's sagacity in laying down in detail the practical *rules*, much more than his orthodoxy in explaining at large the theoretical *principles*, of Christian holiness.

The same one-sided and exclusive mode of viewing Christianity as if it consisted mainly and well-nigh wholly in the enforcement of the principle that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," which leads our author occasionally to speak of holiness as if it were truly meritorious of salvation, seems to have misled him into the adoption of some other peculiarities of opinion, which, though not very prominent upon the face of the following extracts, were yet esteemed by him points of so great importance as to exert a pervading influence over all his habits of religious conception and religious admonition. We allude more especially to the doctrine which he held respecting the extent to which human nature was deteriorated by the fall of Adam; a doctrine the exposition of which forms the object of a great part of his controversial works, and drew upon him very general expressions of dissatisfaction, not only from the Presbyterian divines, to whom exclusively he at first ascribed the doctrine which he opposed, but from some of the most eminent and most personally attached to Taylor among the dignitaries of his own church. The doctrine which he himself had adopted on the subject is little less than pure Pelagianism, maintaining as he does not merely that no man, for original sin alone, will be punished with everlasting destruction,—a conclusion in which, as Bishop Heber remarks, not merely all the Arminians, but some among the Calvinists will agree with him;—but besides this, that by the first sin of the first man

human nature at large lost nothing of the moral power which originally belonged to it on the fact of its creation, but only certain superadded advantages bestowed upon Adam by a special act of Providence; that there is no such thing as a natural predisposition and proneness to evil in human beings as they are now born into the world, and that the causes of the universal wickedness of mankind are to be found in a vast variety of circumstances, altogether independent of an innate corruption of our moral being, the obscurity of the original revelation, "the restraint imposed by God's laws in many instances upon the indifferent, and in other cases lawful inclinations of nature, evil examples, the similitude of Adam's transgression, vices of princes, wars, impunity, ignorance, error, false principles, flatteries, interest, fear, partiality, authority, evil laws, heresy, schism, spite, ambition, natural inclinations, and other inauspicious causes which, proceeding from the natural weakness of the human constitution, are the fountain and proper causes of many consequent evils."

When our author thus unduly exalted the powers of man's unrenewed nature, it is the less wonderful that he seems often to speak too highly of the degree of purity and perfection to which the regenerate attain, even in the present rudimentary condition of their being—the world of commencements and of elements. Of course he rejects the ordinary Calvinistic interpretation of Rom. vii. 14—25, as describing the experience of the regenerate, referring it to the case of a "natural man under the law, better instructed and soundly threatened, and set forward in some instances by the spirit of fear." His notion is that a man is not regenerate till the period when the contest between the flesh and the spirit has been so conclusively settled in favour of the latter, that what remains of human infirmity "expresses itself rather in the imperfection of our duty, than in the commission of criminal actions, or at least in such actions only where the will is surprised, and where the matter is small." In every instance in which a really regenerate man, as David for example, commits a gross or a deliberate sin, Taylor's opinion seems to be that he falls from a state of grace, and is not restored to it except by his subsequent repentance and pardon.

The only other instance to which we shall refer of his absorbing passion for the interests of holy living inducing him to shut his eyes to a plain doctrine of Scripture on account of its apprehended consequences, is the view which he held, and has again and again most elaborately defended, respecting the invalidity of a death-bed repentance; thus, in order that he may excite the living to timely concern, consigning many of the dying to flat despair. It is well for poor humanity that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man,"—that the Bible has shown how to supply the living with abundant excitement to a speedy repentance, without closing the gates of mercy and of hope on the expiring penitent,—and that in the instance of our Lord's two companions in death, he himself has taught us so affectingly that while no one should presume, no one need despair.

Jeremy Taylor, of course, maintained the doctrine held by the church of England in regard to the extent of the atonement as reaching to the whole human race; and often uses on this supposition expressions considerably startling to a Calvinistic ear; while he sides with the majority of Episcopalian divines in holding the doctrine of Baptismal regeneration, or at least in maintaining the efficacy of the "opus operatum" in this holy sacrament to put the recipient into a state of pardon, and to confer upon him a certain fund of grace, to be improved and increased, or to be abused and lost, according to his own choice in future life.

With the exception chiefly of these particulars, the creed of this great author was orthodox. He was a firm believer in the grand fundamental doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation and atonement of the Son, the renewing, sanctifying, and consoling influences of the Holy Ghost, the necessity of faith and repentance, the resurrection of the dead, the two final states of happiness and misery, and the eternal duration of the one and of the other. And in the course of the following pages numerous statements and illustrations of these great doctrines will be met with, equally calculated to instruct and edify, as to strike, to impress, and to delight. The Editor fondly hopes that, after the candid exposition he has given of the leading defects of Taylor's theology, and the still minuter references which will yet be made to certain objectionable views and phrases, the enlightened Christian will find in the extracts now presented to him much, especially in the way of practical guidance and direction, which will be reckoned of the highest value in respect to matter, and in respect to manner of the highest interest. Taylor was a writer who on every subject thought for himself, and clothed his thoughts in a form entirely original and his own, so that both his ideas and his diction have a freshness and vividness and naïvete of character which render even the driest subjects under his treatment interesting and almost entertaining. That boundless exuberance of multifarious erudition which he pours into his works, and which, as has been observed, "would baffle the most learned scholar of our day to trace to its varied sources," is far from being the indication of a mind surrendered to the authority of old opinions—the slave of a venerable but outworn and doting antiquity. However credulous on such authority he may show himself of facts, no one has displayed a more lofty and unfettered independence in the formation of his principles, or a more virgin and unhackneyed invention in the mode of their announcement. The sentiments of the ancients are almost always adduced by him as illustrations, not authorities,—as materials of thought, not ultimate dicta, or subjects of belief. Along with this freshness and originality of thought, the reader will find an additional source of interest in the familiarity with nature and life, and the consequent strain of deep and various feeling which runs through all his genuine writings. There are certainly no works of his age, rich as it was in every kind of literary excellence, except

that of elegant and cultivated taste, which show a profounder knowledge of human character and life, or which abound in the same degree with allusions and remarks that thrill directly to the soul, and awaken with resistless spell the slumbering sympathies and emotions of our being—with touches true to nature and the heart, instantaneously recognized by consciousness and memory. The quality, however, in the writings of Jeremy Taylor, which will most immediately arrest the reader's attention, as distinctive of his intellectual and literary character, will be his gorgeous and prodigal imagination. This imagination is, in our apprehension, chiefly of that particular-description which has been denominated fancy, and in which there are mingled, in large proportion, with the powers of bold invention and vivid conception, the qualities of the ingenious and the picturesque. He paints his subjects with a liveliness and characteristic particularity which seem drawn from actual perception, and which set them before the mind's eye, as it were, in definite form, and individual colouring, and local habitation. This is the great peculiarity and charm of his imagery—the combination of its fairy richness with its palpability and its precision. There is no accumulation of gaudy words without corresponding antitypes in reality—there is none of the vagueness and generality of that so-called imagination which gathers its resources at second hand, and manufactures its "*purpurei panni*," as it were by mechanism, from the hackneyed common-places of description. His images are individual objects—and individual objects personally observed. The formula, "*So have I seen*," with which he is accustomed to introduce his more lengthened comparisons, you feel to be the true account of the way in which the exhaustless storehouse of his fancy has been replenished with its treasures. You imagine that he could tell you what summer morning he himself observed the glorious dayspring which he describes with such exquisite touches of precision and originality, and followed with his own eye the elastic flight of the lark, his favourite bird, into the depths of the morning sky, while with early foot he brushed the dew from the awakening earth. Yet the precision of his fancy is not more remarkable than its affluence and its readiness. In describing the most prosaic scenes of nature or of life, he either finds or forms in them features of sublimity, or beauty, or solemnity, or tenderness, which exalt them into poetry; and, when he lights upon a theme which affords his fancy scope for free and prolonged enjoyment, how eagerly she plunges into the midst of it, and revels in her chosen element like some nymph of faëry amidst the liquid brightness of some enchanted lake, shaking from her radiant locks a shower of spray that sparkles as it falls with all the colours of the rainbow, till, overwhelmed with beauty and delight, she sinks at last into golden slumbers on the green bank's embroidered couch.

It cannot be denied that the more exalted qualities of Jeremy Taylor as an author are unfortunately clouded, and their impression blunted, by the obscurity and affectation of his style; that his imagery often degenerates

into the grotesque and wild, and treats with sovereign contempt the rhetorical rules against the use of "mixed figures;" that he wanted the art of rejection, and disdained the "labour of the file;" that he is hasty in the belief of insufficiently attested facts, and pedantically familiar in allusions to obscure and unheard-of persons. It were easy to increase the catalogue of literary faults and deficiencies like these, but the result would only be to afford a brighter illustration of that conquering might of genius by which we feel them all redeemed,—“that ray of lightning,”—that “diviner inspiration” which places him apart among the privileged spirits of the race, that “mens divinior atque os magna sonaturum,” which “bold beyond rule or art” breathe over his dazzling page “the pomp and prodigality of heaven.”

After these general remarks on the character of Taylor as a divine and as an author, we proceed to lay before our readers a brief account of his life, interspersed with notices of his various writings in the order in which they were given to the world.

Jeremy Taylor was born in the year 1613, in Trinity parish, Cambridge, a place less “native” than “hospitable to famous wits.” By his father, who, though he followed the humble occupation of a barber, was of respectable family, our author was descended from Dr Rowland Taylor, the distinguished chaplain of archbishop Cranmer, and rector of Hadleigh, Suffolk, who suffered martyrdom for the doctrines of the Reformation under queen Mary. From this illustrious witness for Christ, the family, though decayed in the outward advantages of fortune, seem to have inherited a taste for intellectual culture and refinement. We find bishop Taylor, long afterwards, speaking of his father as having been, even in the obscurity of his circumstances, “reasonably learned,” and as having himself “solely grounded his children in grammar and the mathematics.”

In addition to his father’s instructions Jeremy enjoyed the advantage of being a pupil at Perse’s grammar school, then recently founded in Cambridge; and, at the unusually early age of thirteen, was admitted into Caius college in the renowned university of his native city. He entered the university as a sizar. This in Cambridge is the name of a class of students denominated servitors in Oxford, who, in return for certain menial services performed by them in the college to which they belong, receive gratuitous subsistence and education; and our author is one of those illustrious men, the splendour of whose fame, reflected back on the academic station from which they sprang, has done so much to relieve it from the character of invidious degradation which it once possessed. Before taking his degree of A. M. he was admitted to holy orders, and soon afterwards officiated for a college companion named Riden, as lecturer in St Paul’s cathedral, where “by his florid and youthful beauty, his sweet and pleasant air, his sublime and learned discourses,” he excited universal admiration, not un-

mingled with astonishment at the displays he gave of genius and acquirements far beyond his years. The popularity which he acquired in this situation attracted the notice and patronage of Laud, then recently advanced to the primacy, among whose few good qualities as a churchman and a politician, that of munificence in the encouragement of learning and learned men deserves to be conspicuously noticed. The archbishop, notwithstanding the satisfaction which he derived from a personal hearing of Taylor, thought him too young to remain in London; and, although we are told the youthful orator humbly begged his Grace to pardon that fault, and promised to mend it if he lived, yet thought, perhaps justly, that he conferred a greater favour by procuring him the nomination to a fellowship in All-Souls, Oxon—a distinction which is among the most valuable of its kind in Oxford, and, now at least, is almost inaccessible except to individuals of high birth and connexions. During his residence at All-Souls he attracted general attachment by the sweetness of his manners, and was greatly admired, as we are informed by the historian of the Oxonian Athens, for “his excellent casuistical preaching.” During the period that he held his fellowship at Oxford, his residence seems to have been only occasional; but Wood represents him as having greatly profited by the opportunities of intellectual improvement which his connexion with the university afforded; and to this part of his life, while he enjoyed the united advantages of a dignified leisure, a liberal maintenance, and an almost unlimited access to books, may not unnaturally be referred the acquirement, in a great degree, of those immense and multifarious stores of erudition of which the proofs are so importunately abundant in his works. Of equal importance, however, in the formation of character with the studies which a young academician pursues, may be reckoned the friendships which he forms and cherishes; and, we have no doubt, that however unfounded the suspicions to which the circumstance exposed him, of having an inclination towards Popery as a general system—an intimacy which he cultivated at this time to the serious offence of many, with a learned Franciscan friar, known by the monastic name of Francis a Sanctâ Clarâ, who afterwards was principal chaplain to Henrietta, the Roman Catholic queen of Charles II.—exerted a marked influence over many of his habits both of thought and of feeling. It is not too much to suppose that by this intimacy he was introduced to much of that monastic and legendary lore, his familiarity with which is scarcely less remarkable than his boundless store of classical erudition; that it contributed to cherish the sentiments he entertained of the value of ascetic austerities and corporeal mortifications as instruments and exercises of Christian piety; and that it served to encourage that spirit of somewhat latitudinarian charity towards the members of the Romish communion which many of his works and his allusions exhibit. That, as far as the suspicion alluded to ascribed to him a distinct willingness—far more a regularly formed resolution—to return to the bosom of the Roman

mother, it was totally unfounded and calumnious, is plain, not only from his own statement that such a report was "perfectly a slander," but from the proofs he presently gave, both in his discourses and in his plans of life, of opposition to Popery in its main tenets and requirements. On the 5th of Nov., 1638, the anniversary of the gunpowder plot, he preached before the University of Oxford, showing at large, in a style much more liable to the charge of scholastic pedantry than most of his following works, but with a boundless display of acquaintance with Popish theological literature, how that portentous treason was no more than the natural result of the principles and doctrines owned and taught by the highest authorities of the hierarchy; while shortly after he proved how little value he put on one principal part at least of the Romish ecclesiastical discipline, by espousing Phœbe Landisdale, (a lady of whose family or previous history no important particulars are known,) on the 27th of May, 1639. The marriage took place at Uppingham, a parish in Rutlandshire, to the rectory of which Taylor had been appointed the year before by the patronage of Dr Juxon, then Bishop of London. By Phœbe Landisdale he had three sons, one of whom, William, died in May, 1642, and was soon after followed by his mother to the grave.

When the rupture between the king and the parliament, which terminated in the death of the former on the scaffold, was brought to a crisis by Charles's departure to Oxford, Jeremy Taylor early attached himself to the royal cause, and was rewarded with such tokens of approbation as the king had it then in his power to bestow, having been appointed, soon after joining Charles at Oxford in 1642, his domestic chaplain, and admitted by royal mandate to the degree of Doctor in Divinity. His loyalty, however, cost him his living, which was sequestered by authority of Parliament, and he himself reduced in consequence to great pecuniary distress. It is to this period of Taylor's life that the composition is to be assigned of two among his controversial works in support of the then tottering Church of England—the "Defence of Episcopacy," published in 1642, in which, even those who acknowledge his conclusions, admit that he has often taken up ground too high to be tenable; and the "Apology for authorized and set Forms of Liturgy," given to the world in 1646, a work, upon the other hand, which those who differ from its main doctrine will admit to be characterized by no ordinary ability and ingenuity. Of his subsequent adventures in the course of these convulsed and perilous times, we have nothing more precise in the way of information than is contained in the following poetical but vague and indistinct passage from the dedication of his *Liberty of Prophesying* to Christopher Lord Hatton—

"My Lord," he says, "in this great storm, which hath dashed the vessel of the church all to pieces, I have been cast upon the coast of Wales, and, in a little boat, thought to have enjoyed that rest and quietness, which, in England, in a greater, I could not hope for. Here I cast anchor, and

thinking to ride safely, the storm followed me with so impetuous violence that it broke a cable, and I lost my anchor; and here again I was exposed to the mercy of the sea, and the gentleness of an element that could neither distinguish things nor persons. And but that he who stilleth the raging of the sea; and the noise of his waves, and the madness of his people, had provided a plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study. But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy: for 'the barbarous people showed us no little kindness; for, having kindled a fire, they received us all because of the present rain and the cold.' And now since I have come ashore, I have been gathering a few sticks to warm me, a few books to entertain my thoughts, and divert them from the perpetual meditation of my private troubles and the public dyscrasy: but those which I could obtain were so few, and so impertinent, and unuseful to any great purposes, that I began to be sad upon a new stock, and full of apprehension that I should live unprofitably, and die obscurely, and be forgotten, and my bones thrown into some common charnel-house, without any name or note to distinguish me from those who only served their generation, by filling the number of citizens. While I was troubled with these thoughts, and busy to find an opportunity of doing some good, in my small proportion, still the cares of the public did so intervene, that it was as impossible to separate my design from relating to the present, as to exempt myself from the participation of the common calamity; still half my thoughts was, in despite of all my diversions and arts of avocations, fixed upon, and mingled with, the present concerns; so that besides them I could not go."

It has been conjectured with much plausibility, by his biographer, bishop Heber, that the quiet nook in which he here describes himself as casting anchor, and hoping that his little bark might ride in safety till the storm of war and revolution should subside, was the haven of domestic peace, and that the allusion is to his having entered a second time into the matrimonial connexion with Mrs Joanna Bridges, a lady possessed of a competent estate in the county of Carmarthen, and generally believed to have been a natural daughter of Charles I. when prince of Wales. The tempest, however, it is obvious, pursued him with fresh violence even to his harbour of retreat, whatever that might be, and tore his bark once more from its moorings. In 1644, while attached to part of the royal army then in Wales, he was taken prisoner in the victory gained on the 4th of Feb., by the parliamentary troops under col. Gerard before the castle of Cardigan; and it is probably in reference to his treatment, after that event, by the parliamentary commander, that he pays the graceful tribute contained in the extract we have quoted, to the "gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy." In August 1647, when Charles was now in the hands of his enemies, his chaplains were again allowed free access to his person; and, shortly before

the final catastrophe, Taylor had a special interview with the fallen monarch, and was presented by him, in token of his royal regard, with his watch and a few pearls and rubies, once the ornaments of the ebony case in which he kept his bible. Some time previous to this Taylor had united himself with Wm. Nicolson and Wm. Wyat, the former of whom, after the restoration, was advanced to the dignity of bishop of Gloucester, and the latter to a stall in the cathedral of Lincoln, in the endeavour to procure an honest competency by keeping a school at Newton hall, in the parish of Lanfihangel in Wales. This establishment met with very considerable success, and one of its fruits was a work entitled "A New and Easy Institution of (Latin) Grammar," which appeared in 1647, and is introduced by two dedicatory epistles—the one by Wyat, the other by Taylor. The latter, which though brief is devout and eloquent, is addressed to a son of lord Hatton; and to that nobleman himself, who in the course of Taylor's misfortunes had acted towards him the part of a liberal patron, he dedicated a work of higher and more splendid name, which appeared soon after the grammar—the celebrated treatise entitled "The Liberty of Propheying." The dedication of this great work is given, nearly at full length, in the following selection, pp. 486—503, and a few extracts from the work itself, pp. 503—530. It is perhaps, of all Taylor's writings, that which shows him farthest in advance of the age in which he lived, and of the ecclesiastical system in which he had been reared, as the first distinct and avowed defence of toleration which had been ventured on in England, perhaps in Christendom. A much too limited idea, however, is formed of the object of this celebrated work, when we consider it in the light in which it is commonly viewed, as a plea for toleration on the part of civil legislatures and governments. It is at least as much or more a recommendation of liberal terms of communion to churches—an irenicon intended, especially in the circumstances in which the churches of England were then placed, to contribute to the union of all the different sects of Christians on a broad and liberal basis. The main foundation on which he rests his argument is the position, that the maintenance of speculative error to a very great extent is quite consistent with love of truth and uprightness of intention—with general integrity and piety of character. This thesis he illustrates at great length, sometimes with much judgment and felicity, sometimes by very injudicious admissions and extravagant overstatements. The chapter "on the difficulty of expounding scripture" is an example of these faults, and the general effect of a great part of the work is undoubtedly to convey to the mind a very depressing sentiment of despondency and hopelessness regarding the success of even an honest attempt, with the use of all appropriate "appliances and means," to discover the true meaning of a great proportion of the holy oracles. In consideration of this alleged difficulty and uncertainty attending all but the most elementary principles of inspired truth, Taylor proposes that all churches should unite in adopting one symbol, and that symbol "the Apostles

Creed," as the universal standard of catholic Christian communion. While almost all will now agree with Taylor, in regard to the impropriety of suspending the admission of a private Christian to the sacraments of the church, upon his belief of all the particulars contained in a minute and complicated system of theology, there will be found few or none among the evangelical churches who will consent to regard the articles of the so called "Apostles' Creed" as anything approaching to a complete enumeration of the fundamental and peculiar doctrines of the gospel—the belief of which entitles a man to the name and privileges of a Christian. And, if the test proposed by Taylor will be esteemed by general consent much too lax and latitudinarian to serve as a standard even of private Christian communion, much more will it be reckoned so if intended to be the test of belief employed in the admission of individuals into the public Christian ministry, as the author seems, from the very title of his work, to have intended. It is required, we believe, by all evangelical bodies of Christians, even those who doubt or who deny the propriety of demanding subscription to written standards, that those who enter the Christian ministry with the view of exercising it in their communion, should make explicit confession of their sentiments in regard to those great points which they justly regard as fundamental to Christianity, and to which the Apostles' Creed makes no distinct and definite allusion,—for example, the divinity and the atonement of our Saviour,—and, until the pastors of the orthodox denominations are prepared to admit and recognise a Socinian teacher as a brother minister of the gospel of Christ Jesus, then, and not till then, could they agree to Taylor's proposal of adopting the Apostles' Creed as a common ground, not merely of Christian, but of ministerial fellowship.

The beautiful parable of Abraham and the idolater, with which the work in its present form concludes, has given occasion to some discussions of considerable interest in literary history. A slightly different version of this elegant fable was given by Franklin to lord Kaimes, and published in his lordship's work, entitled "*Sketches of the History of Man.*" It is plain that lord Kaimes regarded it as his ingenious correspondent's own composition, although there is no direct evidence to show that Franklin was accessory to the mistake. Taylor describes the parable as taken from "the Jews' books," though there is now no doubt that the original author was the celebrated Persian poet Saadi. The occasion of Taylor's mistake, in all probability was the fact that he himself found the story in the dedication prefixed by George Gentius to the translation of a Jewish work published by him, under the title of "*Historia Judaica,*" in 1651, during the interval between the first and second editions of the "*Liberty of Prophesying,*" in the latter of which the parable for the first time appears.

The publication of this great work was followed by that of one scarcely inferior in celebrity, that entitled "*the Life of Christ, or the Great Exem-*

plar," given to the world in 1548. Of this important work we have inserted very ample specimens in the following selections, pp. 218—353. The preface, which we have given nearly at full length, and the object of which is to show that the preceptive part of true religion, the moral law as taught by nature, by Moses, and by Jesus, is in all its parts entirely reasonable, *i. e.* as Taylor defines his own use of the word—perfectly calculated to promote the end for which man was made, of "living happily," is distinguished in an uncommon degree by comprehensive views, and by an acute and vigorous generalization. The principal theological defect of this able and philosophical production is, that it overlooks the change produced in the moral situation and capacities of man by the fall, exhibiting in embryo those deficient views both of the primeval integrity of human nature and of its subsequent corruption, which Taylor afterwards more distinctly avowed and more systematically defended. The 17th and 18th paragraphs, in particular, require to be cautiously read. The work itself is one of an entirely practical character and object. "Truly," he says, "it is enough to weary the spirit of a disputer, that he shall argue till he hath lost his voice, and his time, and sometimes the question too; and yet no man shall be of his mind more than was before. How few turn Lutherans, or Calvinists, or Roman Catholics, from the religion either of their country or interest! Possibly two or three weak or interested, fantastic and easy, prejudicate and effeminate understandings, pass from church to church, upon grounds as weak as those from which formerly they did dissent; and the same arguments are good or bad, as exterior accidents or interior appetites shall determine. I deny not but, for great causes, some opinions are to be quitted: but when I consider how few do forsake any, and, when any do, oftentimes they choose the wrong side, and they that take the righter do it so by contingency, and the advantage also is so little, I believe that the triumphant persons have but small reason to please themselves in gaining proselytes, since their purchase is so small, and as inconsiderable to their triumph as it is unprofitable to them, who change for the worse or the better upon unworthy motives. In all this there is nothing certain, nothing noble. But he that follows the work of God, that is, labours to gain souls, not to a sect and a subdivision, but to the Christian religion, that is, to the faith and obedience of the Lord Jesus, hath a promise to be assisted and rewarded,—and all those that go to heaven are the purchase of such undertakings, the fruit of such culture and labours; for it is only a holy life that lands us there. And now I have told you my reasons, I shall not be ashamed to say, that I am weary and toiled with rowing up and down in the seas of questions, which the interests of Christendom have commenced, and, in many propositions of which I am heartily persuaded, I am not certain that I am not deceived; and I find that men are most confident of those articles which they can so little prove that they never made questions of them. But I am most certain that, by living in

the religion and fear of God, in obedience to the king, in the charities and duties of communion with my spiritual guides, in justice and love with all the world in their several proportions, I shall not fail of that end which is perfection of human nature, and which will never be obtained by disputing." In pursuance of the plan thus avowed, he sedulously avoids everything approaching to critical or chronological description, everything that is not in its nature directly devotional and practical. Nor even on the plan which he has professedly adopted can the work he has produced, when viewed as a whole, boast any great degree of symmetry or of completeness. His selection of the topics on which he enlarges at length, or which he dismisses with a short and summary notice, is obviously not determined by the comparative importance of the topics themselves, or their prominence among the events which constitute our Saviour's earthly history. Many pages are devoted to the enforcement of the "Duty of Nursing Children," from the example of the virgin mother—an example which, however we may presume that it was set by her in point of fact, is certainly not the subject of any distinct and definite statement in holy writ, while all the stupendous and pathetic circumstances of the most illustrious of our Saviour's miracles, the resurrection of Lazarus, form the subject of only two brief and insignificant paragraphs. The merits of the work, therefore, consist neither in the excellence of its plan, nor in the uniformity of its execution, but in the spiritual worth and weight, the literary splendour and gracefulness, of particular passages. Nor are there, perhaps, any of his works in which we find the results of his profound acquaintance with the human heart, and his ample experience in the art of holy living, more brilliantly illuminated by the rainbow splendours of his genius, and more touchingly relieved by the soothing unction of his peculiar sensibility and tenderness. Like the other works of this great and eminently holy man, "the Life of Christ" must, as a whole, be read with caution, in consequence of that tendency on which we have already remarked, to exalt the importance of the great gospel doctrine which teaches the necessity of holiness to every man that would be saved, above all other parts and principles of Christianity; and too readily to surrender doctrines of considerable importance, which it might at first view appear difficult to reconcile with this, to him the main principle of gospel truth. Though we have taken the liberty of omitting the passages and paragraphs in which these partial views seemed inextricably mingled, it is still proper to guard the reader against one or two scattered expressions which may be thought to have taken their form and tinge from the author's peculiarities of sentiment, as in the vague and unsatisfactory account he has given of sins of infirmity, p. 272, meaning sins which are consistent with the supposition of the individual's being in a state of grace; or where, p. 273, he speaks of God as having "fixed every man's final condition on his own actions in the virtue and obedience of Christ;" or p. 283, of making it our design "to pur-

chase eternity." Thus also, at p. 286, he says, that "in heaven those great felicities which transcend all our apprehensions, are *certainly to be obtained* by leaving our vices and lower appetites;" meaning that "those felicities are *not to be obtained* without leaving these vices." At p. 305 he offers a very unwarranted view of the moral worth and efficacy of acts of martyrdom, when he says, "It is certain that such dyings or great sufferings are heroical actions, and of power to make great compensations and redemptions of time, and of omissions and imperfections." At p. 344, he describes Jesus as undertaking "a grief great enough to make up the imperfect contrition of all the saints."

It appears, from the dedication prefixed to the third part of this great work, in the first edition, that during its composition he had made a most valuable and important friendship, which exerted a considerable influence both on his personal happiness and on the course of his literary exertions. We allude to the intimacy which commenced about this period with the celebrated Richard Vaughan, earl of Carberry, and his singularly excellent countess. The earl of Carberry, whose seat of Golden Grove was situated in the same parish where Taylor's lot was now cast, had held a high military command on the king's side during the civil wars; but as his character and proceedings had always been mild and moderate, and as he was much respected and regarded by many among the opposite party, he had been allowed, after the triumph of the parliament, to compound for his estates on easy terms; and was thus enabled to extend the most valuable assistance to those of his own side—who, like Taylor, had suffered a more total shipwreck in the revolutionary tempest. The nature and extent of this distinguished person's liberality to Taylor, we shall allow the latter to explain in his own words. "My Lord," he says, "your great nobleness and religious charity have taken from me some portions of that glory which I designed to myself, in imitation of St Paul towards the Corinthian church, who esteemed it his honour to preach to them without a revenue; and though also, like him, I have a trade by which I can be more useful to others, and less burdensome to you; yet to you also, under God, I owe the quiet, and the opportunities, and the circumstances of that, as if God had so interweaved the support of my affairs with your charity, that he would have no advantages pass upon me but by your interest; and that I should expect no reward in the issues of my calling, unless your lordship have a share in the blessing." But while Taylor, under the protection and countenance of his excellent patrons, was thus reaping of their carnal things, he more than repaid their kindness by the abundance with which he sowed to them in spiritual things; having regularly officiated in their family in conducting the ministries of divine worship, according to the prescribed ritual of the church of England; so that, as he beautifully reminds the earl, "it was a blessing for which his lordship was to praise God that his family was like Gideon's fleece, irriguous

with a dew from heaven, when much of the vicinage was dry." Of the sermons delivered by him in the course of this domestic ministry, he afterwards published a collection of fifty-two, one for every Sunday in the year; to which, at a still later period, he added a supplement of ten discourses, chiefly preached on public occasions. From these discourses we have given very ample selections, occupying from the 1st to the 218th page of the present work. They will be found, perhaps, beyond all the other extracts in the volume, characterized by the luxuriance and the splendour of Taylor's genius; and certainly inferior to none in the practical wisdom, the knowledge of the human heart, and the applicability to actual circumstances, which make us feel him amidst the conflagration of his eloquence, and even the extravagancies of his fancy, still speaking directly to our familiar consciousness, and for the uses of our daily practice. In the extracts from these remarkable productions which this volume contains, we have endeavoured to relieve the composition, as much as possible, from that oppressive load of classical erudition and legendary lore with which they are overlaid and stifled, rather than adorned; and which, if inappropriate at the best, appears ludicrously unsuitable to the circumstances in which they profess to have been originally delivered, as addressed originally in lord Carbery's private chapel, to the little congregation composed of his patron's family and dependents. The paragraphs entirely composed of such allusions, and which were not interwoven with the texture of the work itself, have been entirely omitted; while, in the cases where they could not be readily detached, or where they seemed especially appropriate, the translations and paraphrases only which Taylor commonly subjoins to the original quotations are retained. It is to be regretted that our sense of editorial duty would not allow us to correct certain statements in the course of these extracts, which, in a doctrinal point of view, seemed to us erroneous and dangerous; and we, therefore, feel ourselves called upon once more to recommend to the reader's attention the general caution given before; while we point out more particularly the following special instances, as perhaps the most glaring instances of rash and unsound expression which this part of the work contains. At page 20 he speaks of men "working for eternal life, and performing such easy conditions upon which it may be obtained." Speaking of the purification of the heart, in p. 27, as leading to sanctification of the life, he says, "It also causes that nothing spring from thence, but gums fit for incense, and oblations for the altar of propitiation, and a cloud of perfume fit to make atonement for our sins, and, being united to the great sacrifice of the world, to reconcile God and man together." At p. 83 he has the idea of "beginning to be reconciled to God by the renewed and hearty purposes of holy living." In pronouncing the eulogy of the martyrs, he introduces, in a saving clause, p. 103, "the incursions of their *seldom* sins." In conformity with his peculiar view of the spiritual life, as ad-

mitting of a fall from a state of grace, we find him, p. 110, saying of a Christian overcome by a sudden temptation to a flagrant sin, "he falls, and dies the death, and hath no new strengths but such as are to be employed for his recovery." And again, at p. 115, he states, "No good man ever commits one act of adultery; no godly man will, at any time, be drunk; or if he be, he ceases to be a godly man, and is run into the confines of death, and is sick at heart, and may die of the sickness—die eternally." At p. 151 he speaks as if in the endeavour to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling "we could present something of our own to God, proportionable to the great rewards of heaven." He surely extends too far the period of immunity from actual sin, when he says of the maiden of twelve years old raised by our blessed Saviour, that "she had not entered into the regions of choice and sinfulness," p. 199; and extenuates the malignity of that sin which remains until death, in the most thoroughly sanctified, when of the countess of Carberry he informs us, p. 208, that "her accounts with God were made up of nothing but small parcels, with passions and angry words, and trifling discontents, which are the alloy of the piety of the most holy persons."

The remarks which we have made, in regard at once to the merits and to the faults of the *Ενιωτος*, may, with equal propriety, be extended to the next in order of our author's works, and of all his writings the most extensively and permanently popular—the Holy Living and Dying—breathing, as they do, the same holy passion after spiritual purity and spiritual excellence—illuminated with the same fascinating decorations of fancy and of genius—displaying the same profound acquaintance with human nature and human life—and liable to the same reprehension, in regard to the too scanty infusion of those peculiar principles of Christinity which, in the scriptural system, lie at the foundation of genuine holiness, as well as the occasional inaccuracies, and harshnesses of expression, which grate upon the ear of one who has been taught to hold fast the form of sound words. There is one idea occurring again and again in the latter of these treatises, which falls in too readily with the course of common apprehensions on this subject, not to be particularly noticed and reprehended; and that is, that the endurance of great temporal sufferings and calamities may help towards the more readily obtaining of eternal pardon. Thus in the prayer to be said in a storm at sea, p. 380, the petitioner is directed to "entreat that God would be pleased to unite his death to that of Jesus, and to accept it so united as a punishment for all his sins;" and again, at p. 480, in the case of a sudden threatening of death, the sick man's friends are exhorted to pray "that the greatness of the calamity may be accepted of the Lord, as an instrument to procure pardon for his defects and degrees of unreadiness."

But Taylor, while he presided over the religion of his noble patron's family, was not content to minister only *ex cathedra*, and by the delivery

of formal and regular discourses. He did not forget the importance of the catechetical and the devotional parts of domestic religion; and, of his care in the conduct of these more private but not less useful departments of his duty, he has left us the proofs in the interesting little manual, which, in honour of the hospitable mansion where it was composed and first brought into use, he entitled the *Golden Grove*—divided into the three heads of “Things to be believed”—“Things to be done”—“Things to be asked;” followed by a series of hymns appropriate to the various festivals of the church, full of fancy, though defective in rhythm and taste. The very high value which Taylor justly put upon the devotional parts of religious service, is proved, not only by this publication, but by the edition of the *Psalter*, published first under the name of Lord Hatton, though now admitted to have been, in the greater part, the work of Jeremy Taylor—with titles and collects according to the matter of each psalm; by the large book of devotions, to which he has given the name of a “Collection of Offices, or Forms of Prayer in cases ordinary and extraordinary;” and by his favourite practice of interspersing all his practical works with acts of devotion and supplication suited to the subject and the circumstances.

In the preface to “*The Golden Grove*,” Taylor had expressed, very vehemently and very freely, his sentiments of deep regret for the overthrow of the church of England, and his strong disapprobation of the procedure of those by whose instrumentality it was effected. These expressions attracted so much notice as to lead to the arrest of the author; though, in consistency with Cromwell’s avowed contempt of “paper pellets,” they do not seem to have been considered of so much importance, as to require that Taylor should be brought to trial, or subjected to more than a short restraint. His enlargement, however, did not continue long, as we find from a letter of his own, published in the latter part of 1665, that he was then, and had been for some months before, a prisoner (for what cause does not appear,) in Chepstow castle. It was again his lot, on this occasion, to experience the attention and courtesy, on the part of his political opponents, to which his genius and his character entitled him, but which it was not the less to their credit that they rendered; “for the gentlemen,” he remarks, “under whose custody I am, as they are careful of their charges, so they are civil to my person.” It is a strong proof, either of the prevailing respect for his general character, or of the conciliatory power of his personal manners, that he should thus repeatedly have had occasion to acknowledge “the generosity of noble enemies.” But the year at which we have now arrived was overshadowed with other troubles than those we have mentioned, and, to Taylor’s mind, more difficult to bear. Early in this year he gave to the world his “*Unum Necessarium*; or the Doctrine and Practice of Repentance, describing the Necessities and Measures of a Strict, a Holy, and a Christian Life, and rescued from Popular Errors”—in which he took upon him to controvert the orthodox doctrine

of the church on the subjects of original sin, and the remainders of corruption in the regenerate; and advanced opinions amounting as nearly as possible, though he strongly disavowed the appellation, to the Pelagian views on these profound and perilous questions. The consequence was, a very general expression of dissatisfaction among the most eminent members of his own church, and particularly on the part of his friend and patron Warner, bishop of Rochester, and the venerable Sanderson who had been his colleague in the royal chaplaincy, and after the Restoration became bishop of Lincoln. Taylor laboured hard, in two or three successive pamphlets, to explain and to defend his own peculiar views in consistency with the representations of the Bible and the articles of his own church, but without making any impression or affording much satisfaction to his friends, and the controversy finally fell asleep, each party retaining its own position.

In the course of this agitated and troublous year it should seem that Taylor first made the acquisition of a friendship which afterwards proved, in no ordinary measure, the support and solace of his life. It was that of the ingenious and amiable John Evelyn, in whose diary we find an entry in the following terms, under the month of March, 1655—"On the 31st, I made a visit to Dr Jeremy Taylor, to confer with him about some spiritual matters, using him thenceforward as my ghostly father, I beseech God Almighty to make me ever mindful of, and thankful for, his heavenly assistances." A considerable amount of highly interesting correspondence between these two distinguished individuals is still in existence, from which we shall introduce only one or two extracts that serve to bring out, very distinctly and pleasingly, the pervading influence of Christian piety and principle over our author's character in the intercourse of private friendship and the occurrences of domestic life. The first of our quotations alludes, with lively recollections of delight, to a visit which he had recently paid to Evelyn, at Sayes Court, where he met with Berkeley, Boyle, and Wilkins—and to a resolution which his friend had lately formed of giving to the world a translation, with notes, of the Latin poet Lucretius—an author whose works, although possessing many attractions to philosophical curiosity and poetical taste, yet, by the atheism of their principles and the nakedness of some of their descriptions, justly appeared to Taylor somewhat unfitted for the peculiar study of a Christian gentleman.

"HONOUR'D AND DEARE S^r,—I hope your servant brought my apology with him, and that I already am pardoned, or excused in your thoughts, that I did not returne an answer yesterday to your friendly letter. S^r, I did believe myself so very much bounde to you for your so kind, so friendly reception of mee in your *Tusculanum*, that I had some little wonder upon mee when I saw you making excuses that it was no better. S^r, I came to see you and your lady, and am highly pleased that I did so, and found all your circumstances to be an heape and union of blessings. But I have not either so great a fancy and opinion of the

prettinesse of your abroad, or so low an opinion of your prudence and piety, as to thinke you can be any wayes transported with them. I know the pleasure of them is gone off from their height before one month's possession; and that strangers, and seldome seers, feelee the beauty of them more than you who dwell with them. I am pleased, indeed, at the order and the cleannesse of all your outward things; and look upon you not onely as a person, by way of thankfulnessse to God for his mercies and goodnesse to you, specially obliged to a great measure of piety, but also as one who, being freed in great degrees from secular cares and impediments, can, without excuse and allay, wholly intend what you so passionately desire, the service of God. But, now I am considering yours, and enumerating my owne pleasures, I cannot but adde that, though I could not choose but be delighted by seeing all about you, yet my delices were really in seeing you severe and unconcerned in these things, and now in finding your affections wholly a stranger to them, and to communicate with them no portion of your passion but such as is necessary to him that uses them or receives their ministries. S^r, I long truly to converse with you; for I doe not doubt but in those liberties we shall both goe bettered from each other. For your *Lucretius*, I perceive you have suffered the importunity of too kind friends to prevaile with you. I will not say to you that your *Lucretius* is as far distant from the severity of a Christian as the faire Ethiopian was from the duty of B^p Heliodorus; for indeede it is nothing but what may become the labours of a Christian gentleman, those things onely abated which our evil age needes not; for which also I hope you either have by notes, or will by preface prepare a sufficient antidote: But since you are engag'd in it, doe not neglect to adorne it, and take what care of it it can require or neede; for that neglect will be a reproofe of your own act, and looke as if you did it with an unsatisfied mind, and then you may make that to be wholly a sin, from which onely by prudence and charity you could before be advised to abstain. But, S^r, if you will give me leave, I will impose such a penance upon you for your publication of *Lucretius*, as shall neither displease God nor you; and since you are buisy in that which may minister directly to learning, and indirectly to error or the confidences of men, who of themselves are apt enough to hide their vices in irreligion, I know you will be willing, and will suffer your selfe to be intreated, to imploy the same pen in the glorifications of God, and the ministeries of eucharist and prayer. S^r, if you have M^r *Silhon de l'Immortalité de l'Ame*, I desire you to lend it mee for a weeke; and believe that I am in great heartiness and dearenesse of affection,

“DEARE S^r,

“Your obliged and most affectionate friend and servant,

“JER. TAYLOR.”

The penance to which Taylor alludes in the close of this letter is more fully explained by him in the following passage of a letter, dated August,

23, 1656 :—"I was once bold with you; I would faine be so once more. It is a thousand pitties but our English tongue should be enriched with a translation of all the sacred hymnes which are respersed in all the rituals and church bookes. I was thinking to have beg'd of you a translation of that well-knowne hymne, '*Dies iræ, dies illa, Solvet sæclum in favillâ;*' which, if it were a little changed, would be an excellent divine song: but I am not willing to bring trouble to you; onely it is a thousand times to be lamented that the beaux esprits of England doe not think divine things to be worthy subjects for their poesy and spare houres."

The next two extracts from two letters, dated the one July 19th, 1656, and the other Feb. 22d, 1657, show that in addition to the other trials which at this period pressed upon his spirit, he was called to contend with domestic bereavements, peculiarly severe—and prove with what noble and touching resignation he was enabled to bear himself under his Father's chastening hand.

"DEARE SIR," he remarks in the one, "I am in some little disorder by reason of the death of a little child of mine, a boy that lately made us very glad: but now he rejoyces in his little orbe, while we thinke, and sigh, and long to be as safe as he is."

"I know," he says in the other, "you will either excuse or acquit, or at least pardon mee that I have so long seemingly neglected to make a returne to your so kind and friendly letter; when I shall tell you that I have passed through a great cloud which hath wetted mee deeper than the skin. It hath pleased God to send the small poxe and feavers among my children; and I have, since I received your last, buried two sweet, hopeful boyes; and have now but one sonne left, whom I intend, if it please God, to bring up to London before Easter, and then I hope to waite upon you, and by your sweet conversation and other divertisements, if not to alleviate my sorrow, yet, at least, to entertain myself and keep me from too intense and actual thinkings of my trouble. Dear S^r, will you doe so much for mee as to beg my pardon of Mr Thurland, that I have yet made no returne to him for his so friendly letter and expressions. S^r, you see there is too much matter to make excuse; my sorrow will, at least, render me an object of every good man's pity and commiseration. But, for myself, I bless God, I have observed and felt so much mercy in this angry dispensation of God, that I am almost transported, I am sure, highly pleased with thinking how infinitely sweet his mercies are when his judgments are so gracious. S^r, there are many particulars in your letter which I would faine have answered; but, still, my little sadneses intervene, and will yet suffer me to write nothing else: but that I beg your prayers, and that you will still own me to be,

"DEARE AND HONURED SIR,

"Your very affectionate friend and hearty servant,

"Feb. 22, 1656-7."

"JER. TAYLOR."

The experience to which he had thus personally been called, both of the bitterness of domestic desolation, and of the power of the gospel to support and to console under the severest strokes of a bereaving providence, richly qualified him to act the part of a comforter to others under similar circumstances of darkness and distress. How well he discharged his duties in this kind will appear from the following beautiful letter of condolence, addressed to Evelyn, on the death of his sons Richard and George :—

“TO JOHN EVELYN, ESQUIRE.

“DEARE SIR,—If dividing and sharing griefes were like the cutting of rivers, I dare say to you, you would find your streame much abated; for I account mysele to have a great cause of sorrow, not onely in the diminution of the numbers of your joys and hopes, but in the losse of that pretty person, your strangely hopeful boy. I cannot tell all my owne sorrowes without adding to yours; and the causes of my real sadnesse in your losse are so just and so reasonable, that I can no otherwise comfort you but by telling you, that you have very great cause to mourne: so certaine it is that grieve does propagate as fire does. You have enkindled my funeral torch, and by joining mine to yours, I doe but encrease the flame. ‘*Hoc me malè urit,*’ is the best signification of my apprehension of your sad story. But, Sir, I cannot choose, but I must hold another and a brighter flame to you, it is already burning in your heart; and if I can but remove the darke side of the lanthorne, you have enoughe within you to warme yoursele, and to shine to others. Remember, Sir, your two boyes are two bright starres, and their innocence is secured, and you shall never hear evil of them agayne. Their state is safe, and heaven is given to them upon very easy termes; nothing but to be borne and die. It will cost you more trouble to get where they are; and amongst other things one of the hardnessees will be, that you must overcome even this just and reasonable grieve; and, indeed, though the grieve hath but too reasonable a cause, yet it is much more reasonable that you master it. For besides that they are no losers, but you are the person that complains, doe but consider what you would have suffer’d for their interest: you [would] have suffered them to goe from you, to be great princes in a strange country: and if you can be content to suffer your owne inconvenience for their interest, you command [commend] your worthiest love, and the question of mourning is at an end. But you have said and done well, when you look upon it as a rod of God; and he that so smites here will spare hereafter: and if you, by patience and submission, imprint the discipline upon your own flesh, you kill the cause, and make the effect very tolerable; because it is, in some sense, chosen, and therefore, in no sense, insufferable. Sir, if you doe not looke to it, time will snatch your honour from you, and reproach you for not effecting that by Christian philosophy which time will doe alone. And if you consider, that of the

bravest men in the world, we find the seldomest stories of their children, and the apostles had none, and thousands of the worthiest persons, that sound most in story, died childlesse: you will find it is a rare act of Providence so to impose upon worthy men a necessity of perpetuating their names by worthy actions and discourses, governments and reasonings. If the breach be never repair'd, it is because God does not see it fitt to be; and if you will be of his mind, it will be much the better. But, Sir, you will pardon my zeale and passion for your comfort, I will readily confesse that you have no need of any discourse from me to comfort you. Sir, now you have an opportunity of serving God by passive graces; strive to be an example and a comfort to your lady, and by your wise counsel and comfort, stand in the breaches of your owne family, and make it appeare that you are more to her than ten sons. Sir, by the assistance of almighty God, I purpose to wait on you some time next weeke, that I may be a wnesse of your Christian courage and bravery; and that I may see, that God never displeases you, as long as the main stake is preserved, I meane your hopes and confidences of heaven. Sir, I shall pray for all that you can want, that is, some degrees of comfort and a present mind; and shall alwayes doe you honour, and faine also would doe you service, if it were in the power, as it is in the affections and desires of,

“DEAR SIR,

“Your most affectionate and obliged friend and servant,

Feb. 17, 1657-8.

“JER. TAYLOR.”

There is reason to believe that soon after this distressing series of domestic bereavements, and, perhaps, in consequence of the sorrowful recollections with which it had overhung the scene of his retreat in Wales, he removed to London, and officiated for some time to private congregations of those who still retained their attachment to the episcopal principles and ritual. In the year 1658, the earl of Conway, a nobleman of great property and influence in the north of Ireland, anxious to secure the benefit of Taylor's talents and exertions for the religious improvement of his neighbourhood in that country, made the proposal, through his friend Evelyn, of procuring for him an alternate lectureship in the borough of Lisburne, or as it was then called Lisnagarvy, with some other prospective advantages. Taylor felt so strongly the probable awkwardness and precariousness of such a situation under the then existing arrangement of ecclesiastical affairs, that he at first decidedly declined the appointment,—assigning his reasons to the following effect, in a letter to Evelyn, dated May 12, 1658:—

“HONOUR'D SIR,—I returne you many thanks for your care of my temporal affaires: I wish I may be able to give you as good account of my watchfulnesse for your service, as you have of your diligence to doe me benefit. But concerning the thing itselfe, I am to give you this account.

I like not the condition of being a lecturer under the dispose of another, nor to serve in my semicircle, where a Presbyterian and myselfe shall be like Castor and Pollux, the one up and the other downe; which, methinkes, is like the worshipping the sun, and making him the deity, that we may be religious halfe the yeare, and every night serve another interest. Sir, the stipend is so inconsiderable, it will not pay the charge and trouble of remooving my selfe and family. It is wholly arbitrary; for the triers may overthrow it; or the vicar may forbid it; or the subscribers may die, or grow weary, or poore, or be absent. I beseech you, Sir, pay my thankes to your friend, who had so much kindnesse for mee as to intend my benefitt: I thinke myselfe no lesse obliged to him and you than if I had accepted it."

The fact, however, shows that these scruples, though of considerable weight, were eventually removed, and in the month of June he set out for Lisburne, bearing with him recommendations to the principal authorities, and a passport from Cromwell himself under his sign manual and privy seal. For the space of about two years he continued to discharge the duty of weekly lecturer at Lisburne, uninterrupted except by a menace of prosecution on behalf of the commonwealth, which was excited, however, entirely by private malice and envy, and which brought with it no more serious consequences than a journey to Dublin, in the depth of winter, in order to clear himself before the commissioners of government. His principal residence during these two years seems to have been at a house in the immediate neighbourhood of his patron's magnificent mansion of Portmore. The situation is described as having been of the most picturesque and beautiful description, and admirably congenial to those exercises of tranquil and contemplative devotion in which the mind of Jeremy Taylor found its sweetest soothing and repose. Lord Conway's park was bordered by two considerable and romantic lakes, Loch Neagh, and Loch Bag, (or the Little Lake), each studded with beautiful islets; to some one or other of which the tradition of the neighbourhood relates that our author was accustomed often to retire; and there, amidst the embowering foliage or under the pale shadow of the grey monastic ruins, to experience no doubt what the poet has with such pensive beauty described :

Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.

The calm retreat—the silent shade
With praise and prayer agree,
And seem by thy sweet bounty made
For those that follow thee!

There if thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,

Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God !

There, like the nightingale, she pours
Her solitary lays;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise.

That something resembling this was indeed the experience of Taylor during his continuance in that delicious retirement, ("amœnissimo recessu," as he himself describes it,) may be gathered from the following letter to Evelyn, dated Nov. 3, 1659, while the country was yet in that unsettled state which intervened between the death of Cromwell and the Restoration,

"TO JOHN EVELYN, ESQUIRE.

"HONOURED AND DEARE SIR,—Yours dated July 23d, I received not till All Saints day : it seemes it was stopp'd by the intervening troubles in England : but it was lodged in a good hand, and came safely and unbroken to me. I must needs beg the favour of you that I may receive from you an account of your health and present conditions, and of your family; for I feare concerning all my friends, but especially for those few very choice ones I have, lest the present troubles may have done them any violence in their affaires or content. It is now long since that cloud passed; and though I suppose the sky is yet full of meteors and evil prognostics, yet you all have time to consider concerning your peace and your securities. That was not God's time to relieve his church, and I cannot understand from what quarter that wind blew, and whether it was for us or against us. But God disposes all things wisely; and religion can receive no detriment or diminution but by our owne fault. I long, Sir, to come to converse with you; for I promise to myselfe that I may receive from you an excellent account of your progression in religion, and that you are entred into the experimental and secret way of it, which is that state of excellency whether [whither] good persons use to arrive after a state of repentance and caution. My retirement in this solitary place hath been, I hope, of some advantage to me as to this state of religion, in which I am yet but a novice, but by the goodness of God, I see fine things before me whither I am contending. It is a great, but a good worke, and I beg of you to assist me with your prayers, and to obtaine of God for me that I may arrive at that height of love and union with God, which is given to all those soules who are very deare to God. Sir, if it please God, I purpose to be in London in April next, where I hope for the comfort of conversing with you. In the mean time, be pleas'd to accept my thanks for your great kindnesse in taking care of me in that token you were pleased to leave with Mr Martin. I am sorry the evil circumstances of the times made it any way afflictive or inconvenient. I had rather you should not have been burden'd than that I should have received kindnesse on hard conditions to you. Sir, I shall not trouble your studies

now, for I suppose you are very buisy there : but I shall desire the favour that I may know what you are now doing, for you cannot separate your affaires from being of concerne to,

“ DEARE SIR,

“ Your very affectionate friend and humble servant,

Portmore, Nov. 3d, 1659.

“ JER. TAYLOR.”

In fulfilment of the intention expressed in the preceding letter, Taylor repaired to London, in April 1660, on the very eve of the return of Charles II., to whom he dedicated, by permission, the great work on the composition of which he had been for a long time before engaged, and which he had the satisfaction of conducting safely through the press during this visit to the metropolis, “ *The Ductor Dubitantium, or Rule of Conscience.*” The following volume contains only a single extract from this the favourite work of our author, that magnificent description which, in the chapter treating of what he has denominated the probable conscience, he has given of the nature and effect of cumulative circumstantial proof, as illustrated by the evidence of Christianity, pp. 531—551. The reason of this frugality of selection from so ponderous a work, and one on which our author seems to have rested his principal hopes of usefulness and fame, is its comparative barrenness of utility and interest when viewed in connexion with the tastes and habits of the present age, and the general disrepute into which the art of which it contains the institutes—the art of casuistry—has now fallen. It seems now acknowledged that the true way of teaching Christian ethics is by the illustration and enforcement of general principles, and that for all important practical purposes it is seldom necessary to go into greater details than the express letter of the word of God exhibits. It has been felt that the attempt to comprehend all possible cases of moral action under a system constructed on the scale of minutiae, specially adopted by most of the old casuists, led to the introduction of a vast mass of matter useless and irrelevant to the circumstances of each individual reader ; while each upon the other hand amidst the infinite diversity of circumstances in which men are called to act as moral and responsible beings, found in all probability that the particular cases of conscience which had proved interesting to himself as an individual, had not occurred to the mind of the professed “ *Ductor Dubitantium,*” and had therefore been left by him unnoticed and unsolved. The undertaking, therefore, systematically to decide all doubtful cases by anticipation, except by means of principles highly general, must, from the nature of the case, turn out upon the whole uninteresting and unsatisfactory, both on account of what such a work must contain, and of what it must omit. Nor can our author’s favourite production—although it is but fair to acknowledge that it far surpasses most compositions of the kind, in respect of philosophical arrangement and lucid generalization—be justly exempted from the

common condemnation attaching to all works of the class, of being, except in particular passages, such as the extract we have given, very heavy and difficult reading.

The same year was marked by the publication of his "Worthy Communicant," a highly judicious and valuable work, embodying with greater fullness and detail the sentiments which the reader will find more briefly expressed in the extracts relating to the Holy Communion, from his other writings which the present volume embraces.

The king's return changed entirely the aspect of Taylor's worldly fortunes, as might naturally be expected in the case of one who had exhibited so undaunted and unwearied an attachment to the exiled family and the fallen church, and made honours and preferment now flow in upon him in full and rapid tide. On the 6th of August, 1660, he was nominated to the bishopric of Down and Connor, and shortly after was elected vice-chancellor of the university of Dublin. In January, 1661, he was consecrated in the cathedral of St Patrick; he was appointed, in February, a member of the privy council; in April, the diocese of Dromore was committed to his care; and in May he was appointed to preach at the opening of the two houses of Parliament. In the conspicuous offices he was now called to fill, he exerted himself with an energy and zeal worthy of their importance and of his own character. His vigorous and wise administration as vice-chancellor is generally acknowledged as having laid the foundation of that high reputation which the university of Dublin has so long enjoyed, and still retains—while his management of the dioceses intrusted to his superintendence was in the highest degree laborious and active—and, as far as could well be expected in the circumstances, gentle and conciliatory toward the non-conformist clergy. Having found his cathedral of Dromore in a very ruinous and dilapidated state, he rebuilt the choir at his own expense, his wife contributing the communion vessels, which are still preserved.

The works which he published during his episcopal life were comparatively few and inconsiderable. He apologizes for this to Evelyn, on the ground of his laborious official duties, "I am so full of publicke concerns," he says, "and the troubles of businesse in my diocese, that I cannot yet have leisure to think much of my old delightful employment." Besides a few occasional sermons, the only works of any extent which proceeded from his pen during this period were his "*Χρίσις Τελεωτική*, or Defence of Confirmation," and his "Dissuasive from Popery," a work undertaken somewhat against his will at the urgent entreaty of the Irish bishops, and executed at once in the most amiable spirit, and with the most triumphant success. He had projected, and was indeed engaged with a discourse on the Beatitudes, when, on the 3d of August, 1667, he was attacked by a fever—under which his constitution, already undermined by suffering and fatigue, and sorely shaken by the melancholy death of his eldest son in a

duel fatal to both parties, finally gave way, and after ten days' illness this great and good man expired in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the seventh of his episcopate.

Jeremy Taylor was distinguished by the comeliness of his person and his countenance, the sweetness of his temper, the affability of his manners, and the apparently total absence of selfishness for which his whole character and conduct were remarkable. His liberality was alike diffusive and unostentatious; his personal devotion as humble as it was pervading and intense. "To sum up all in a few words," says bishop Rusk, his successor in the see of Dromore, and the preacher of his funeral sermon, "this great prelate had the good humour of a gentleman, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman; the profoundness of a philosopher, the wisdom of a counsellor, and the piety of a saint."

BEAUTIES

OF

JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

THE TERROR OF THE WICKED AT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT,

ARISING FROM THE

MULTITUDE OF PERSONS WITH WHOM THEY SHALL BE THEN SURROUNDED.

CONSIDER the persons who are to be judged : even you, and I, and all the world ; kings and priests, nobles and learned, the crafty and the easy, the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the prevailing tyrant and the oppressed party, shall all appear to receive their sentence ; and this is so far from abating any thing of its terror and our near concernment, that it much increases it : for, although concerning precepts and discourses, we are apt to neglect in particular, what is recommended in general, and in incidences of mortality and sad events, the singularity of the chance heightens the apprehension of the evil ; yet it is so by accident, and only in regard of our imperfection ; it being an effect of self-love, or some little creeping envy, which adheres too often to the unfortunate and miserable ; or else, because the sorrow is apt to increase by being apprehended to be a rare case, and a singular unworthiness in him who is afflicted, otherwise than is common to the sons of men, companions of his sin, and brethren of his nature, and partners of his usual accidents ; yet, in final and extreme events, the multitude of sufferers does not lessen but increase the sufferings ; and when the first day of judgment happened, that (I mean) of the universal deluge of waters upon the old world, the calamity swelled like the flood, and every man saw his friend perish, and the neighbours of his dwelling, and the relatives of his house, and the sharers of his joys, and yesterday's bride, and the new-born heir, the priest of the family, and the honour of the kindred, all dying or dead, drenched in water and the Divine vengeance ; and then they had no place to flee unto, no man cared for their souls ; they had none to go unto for counsel, no sanctuary high enough to keep them from the vengeance that rained down from heaven ; and so it shall be at the day of judgment, when that world and this, and all that shall be born hereafter, shall pass through the same Red Sea, and be all baptized with the same fire, and be involved in the same cloud, in which shall be thunderings and terrors infinite ; every man's fear shall be increased by his neighbour's shrieks, and the amazement that all the world shall be in, shall unite as the sparks of a raging furnace into a globe of fire, and roll upon its own principal, and increase by direct appearances, and intolerable reflections. He

that stands in a church-yard in the time of a great plague, and hears the passing-bell perpetually telling the sad stories of death, and sees crowds of infected bodies pressing to their graves, and others sick and tremulous, and death, dressed up in all the images of sorrow, round about him, is not supported in his spirit by the variety of his sorrow : and at doomsday, when the terrors are universal, besides that it is itself so much greater, because it can affright the whole world, it is also made greater by communication and a sorrowful influence ; grief being then strongly infectious, when there is no variety of state, but an entire kingdom of fear ; and amazement is the king of all our passions, and all the world its subjects : and that shriek must needs be terrible, when millions of men and women, at the same instant, shall fearfully cry out, and the noise shall mingle with the trumpet of the archangel, with the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens, and the crack of the dissolving world, when the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes. But this general consideration may be heightened with four or five circumstances.

1. Consider what an infinite multitude of angels, and men, and women, shall then appear ; it is a huge assembly, when the men of one kingdom, the men of one age in a single province, are gathered together into heaps and confusion of disorder ; but then, all kingdoms of all ages, all the armies that ever mustered, all the world that Augustus Cæsar taxed, all those hundreds of millions that were slain in all the Roman wars, from Numa's time till Italy was broken into principalities and small exarchates ; all these, and all that can come into numbers, and that did descend from the loins of Adam, shall at once be represented ; to which account if we add the armies of heaven, the nine orders of blessed spirits, and the infinite numbers in every order, we may suppose the numbers fit to express the majesty of that God, and the terror of that Judge, who is the Lord and Father of all that unimaginable multitude.

2. In this great multitude we shall meet all those, who, by their example and their holy precepts, have, like tapers, enkindled with a beam of the Sun of Righteousness, enlightened us, and taught us to walk in the paths of justice. There we shall see all those good men, whom God sent to preach to us, and recall us from human follies and inhuman practices : and when we espy the good man, that chid us for our last drunkenness or adulteries, it shall then also be remembered how we mocked at counsel, and were civilly modest at the reproof, but laughed when the man was gone, and accepted it for a religious compliment, and took our leaves, and went and did the same again. But then, things shall put on another face : and that we smiled at here and slighted fondly, shall then be the greatest terror in the world ; men shall feel that they once laughed at their own destruction, and rejected health, when it was offered by a man of God upon no other condition, but that they would be wise, and not be in love with death. Then they shall perceive, that if they had obeyed an easy and a sober counsel, they had been partners of the same felicity, which they see so illustrious upon the heads of those preachers, " whose work is with the Lord," and who, by their life and doctrine, endeavoured to snatch the soul of their friend or relatives from an intolerable misery. But he that sees a crown put upon their heads, that give good counsel, and preach holy and severe sermons with designs of charity and piety, will also then perceive that God did not send preachers for nothing, on trifling errands and without regard : but that work, which he crowns in them, he purposed should be effective

to us, persuasive to the understanding, and active upon our consciences. Good preachers, by their doctrine, and all good men, by their lives, are the accusers of the disobedient; and they shall rise up from their seats, and judge and condemn the follies of those who thought their piety to be want of courage, and their discourses pedantical, and their reproofs the priests' trade, but of no signification, because they preferred moments before eternity.

3. There in that great assembly shall be seen all those converts, who, upon easier terms, and fewer miracles, and a less experience, and a younger grace, and a seldomer preaching, and more unlikely circumstances, have suffered the work of God to prosper upon their spirits, and have been obedient to the heavenly calling. There shall stand the men of Nineveh, and they "shall stand upright in judgment," for they, at the preaching of one man, in a less space than forty days, returned unto the Lord their God; but we have heard him call all our lives, and, like the deaf adder, stopped our ears against the voice of God's servants, "charm they never so wisely." There shall appear the men of Capernaum, and the queen of the South, and the men of Berea, and the first fruits of the Christian church, and the holy martyrs, and shall proclaim to all the world, that it was not impossible to do the work of grace in the midst of all our weaknesses, and accidental disadvantages: and that the "obedience of faith," and "the labour of love," and the contentions of chastity, and the severities of temperance and self-denial, are not such insuperable mountains, but that an honest and sober person may perform them in acceptable degrees, if he have but a ready ear, and a willing mind, and an honest heart: and this scene of honest persons shall make the Divine judgment upon sinners more reasonable, and apparently just in passing upon them the horrible sentence; for why cannot we as well serve God in peace, as others served him in war? why cannot we love him as well when he treats us sweetly, and gives us health and plenty, honours or fair fortunes, reputation or contentedness, quietness and peace, as others did upon gibbets, and under axes, in the hands of tormentors and in hard wildernesses, in nakedness and poverty, in the midst of all evil things, and all sad discomforts? Concerning this no answer can be made.

4. But there is a worse sight than this yet, which, in that great assembly, shall distract our sight, and amaze our spirits. There men shall meet the partners of their sins, and them that drank the round, when they crowned their heads with folly and forgetfulness, and their cups with wine and noises. There shall ye see that poor, perishing soul, whom thou didst tempt to adultery and wantonness, to drunkenness or perjury, to rebellion or an evil interest, by power or craft, by witty discourses or deep dissembling, by scandal or a snare, by evil example or pernicious counsel, by malice or unwariness; and when all this is summed up, and from the variety of its particulars, is drawn into an uneasy load and a formidable sum, possibly we may find sights enough to scare all our confidences, and arguments enough to press our evil souls into the sorrows of a most intolerable death. For, however we make now but light accounts and evil proportions concerning it, yet it will be a fearful circumstance of appearing, to see one, or two, or ten, or twenty accursed souls, despairing, miserable, infinitely miserable, roaring and blaspheming, and fearfully cursing thee as the cause of its eternal sorrows. Thy lust be-

trayed and rifled her weak, unguarded innocence; thy example made thy servant confident to lie, or to be perjured; thy society brought a third into intemperance and the disguises of a beast: and when thou seest that soul, with whom thou didst sin, dragged into hell, well mayest thou fear to drink the dregs of thy intolerable potion.—And because very many sins are sins of society and confederation; such are fornication, drunkenness, bribery, simony, rebellion, schism, and many others; it is a hard and a weighty consideration, what shall become of any one of us, who have tempted our brother or sister to sin and death: for though God hath spared our life, and they are dead, and their debt-books are sealed up till the day of account; yet the mischief of our sin is gone before us, and it is like a murder but more execrable: the soul is dead in trespasses and sins, and sealed up to an eternal sorrow; and thou shalt see, at doomsday, what damnable uncharitableness thou hast done. That soul that cries to those rocks to cover her, if it had not been for thy perpetual temptations, might have followed the Lamb in a white robe; and that poor man that is clothed with shame and flames of fire, would have shined in glory, but that thou didst force him to be partner of thy baseness. And who shall pay for this loss? a soul is lost by thy means; thou hast defeated the holy purposes of the Lord's bitter passion by thy impurities; and what shall happen to thee, by whom thy brother dies eternally? Of all the considerations that concern this part of the horrors of doomsday, nothing can be more formidable than this, to such whom it does concern: and truly it concerns so many, and amongst so many, perhaps some persons are so tender, that it might affright their hopes, and discompose their industries and spritful labours of repentance; but that our most merciful Lord hath, in the midst of all the fearful circumstances of his second coming, interwoven this one comfort relating to this, which, to my sense, seems the most fearful and killing circumstance: “Two shall be grinding at one mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be in a bed; the one shall be taken and the other left;” that is, those who are confederate in the same fortunes, and interests, and actions, may yet have a different sentence: for an early and an active repentance will wash off this account, and put it upon the tables of the cross; and though it ought to make us diligent and careful, charitable and penitent, hugely penitent, even so long as we live, yet when we shall appear together, there is a mercy that shall there separate us who sometimes had blended each other in a common crime. Blessed be the mercies of God, who hath so carefully provided a fruitful shower of grace, to refresh the miseries and dangers of the greatest part of mankind.—But truly, it would concern very many to be solicitous concerning the event of those souls, with whom we have mingled death and sin; for many of those sentences, which have been passed and decreed concerning our departed relatives, will concern us nearly, and we are bound in the same bundles, and shall be thrown into the same fires, unless we repent for our own sins, and double our sorrows for their damnation.

5. We may consider that this infinite multitude of men, women, angels, and devils, is not ineffective as a number in Pythagoras' tables, but must needs have influence upon every spirit that shall there appear. For the transactions of that court are not like orations spoken by a Grecian orator in the circles of his people, heard by them that crowd nearest him, or that sound limited by the circles of air, or the enclosure of a wall; but every

thing is represented to every person, and then let it be considered, when thy shame and secret turpitude, thy midnight revels and secret hypocrisies, thy lustful thoughts and treacherous designs, thy falsehood to God and startings from thy holy promises, thy follies and impieties shall be laid open before all the world, and that then shall be spoken by the trumpet of an archangel upon the housetop, the highest battlements of heaven, all those filthy words and lewd circumstances, which thou didst act secretly ; thou wilt find, that thou wilt have reason strangely to be ashamed. All the wise men in the world shall know how vile thou hast been : and then consider, with what confusion of face wouldst thou stand in the presence of a good man and a severe, if peradventure he should suddenly draw thy curtain, and find thee in the sins of shame and lust ; it must be infinitely more, when God and all the angels of heaven and earth, all his holy myriads, and all his redeemed saints, shall stare and wonder at thy impurities and follies. I have read a story, that a young gentleman, being passionately by his mother dissuaded from entering into the severe courses of a religious and single life, broke from her importunity by saying, "I am resolved by all means to save my soul." But when he had undertaken a rule with passion, he performed it carelessly and remissly, and was but lukewarm in his religion, and quickly proceeded to a melancholy and wearied spirit, and from thence to a sickness and the neighbourhood of death : but falling into an agony and a fantastic vision, dreamed that he saw himself summoned before God's angry throne, and from thence hurried into a place of torments, where espying his mother, full of scorn she upbraided him with his former answer, and asked him why he did not save his soul by all means, according as he undertook. But when the sick man awaked and recovered, he made his words good indeed, and prayed frequently, and fasted severely, and laboured humbly, and conversed charitably, and mortified himself severely, and refused such secular solaces which other good men received to refresh and sustain their infirmities, and gave no other account to them that asked him but this : If I could not in my ecstasy or dream endure my mother's upbraiding my follies and weak religion, how shall I be able to suffer that God should redargue me at doomsday, and the angels reproach my lukewarmness, and the devils aggravate my sins, and all the saints of God deride my follies and hypocrisies ? The effect of that man's consideration may serve to actuate a meditation in every one of us : for we shall all be at that pass, that unless our shame and sorrows be cleansed by a timely repentance, and covered by the robe of Christ, we shall suffer the anger of God, the scorn of saints and angels, and our own shame in the general assembly of all mankind. This argument is most considerable to them, who are tender of their precious name and sensible of honour ; if they rather would choose death than a disgrace, poverty rather than shame, let them remember that a sinful life will bring them to an intolerable shame at that day, when all that is excellent in heaven and earth, shall be summoned as witnesses and parties in a fearful scrutiny.

The sum is this, all that are born of Adam shall appear before God and his Christ, and all the innumerable companies of angels and devils shall be there : and the wicked shall be affrighted with every thing they see ; and there they shall see those good men, that taught them the ways of life ; and all those evil persons, whom themselves have tempted into the ways of death ; and those who were converted upon easier terms ; and some of these shall

shame the wicked, and some shall curse them, and some shall upbraid them, and all shall amaze them.

THE TERROR OF THE WICKED AT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT,

ARISING FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PERSON OF THE JUDGE.

1. IF we consider the person of the Judge, we first perceive that he is interested in the inquiry of the crimes he is to sentence—"They shall look on him whom they have pierced." It was for thy sins that the Judge did suffer unspeakable pains, as were enough to reconcile all the world to God; the sum and spirit of which pains could not be better understood than by the consequence of his own words, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" meaning that he felt such horrible, pure, unmingled sorrows, that although his human nature was personally united to the Godhead, yet at that instant he felt no comfortable emanations by sensible perception from the Divinity, but he was so over-drenched in sorrow, that the Godhead seemed to have forsaken him. Beyond this nothing can be added: but then, that thou hast for thy own particular made all this in vain and ineffective, that Christ thy Lord and Judge should be tormented for nothing, that thou wouldest not accept felicity and pardon, when he purchased them at so dear a price, must needs be an infinite condemnation to such persons. How shalt thou look upon him that fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst scorn his miraculous mercies? How shall we dare to behold that lovely face that brought salvation to us, and we turned away and fell in love with death, and kissed deformity and sins? and yet in the beholding that face consists much of the glories of eternity. All the pains and passions, the sorrows and the groans, the humility and poverty, the labours and the watchings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles and the prophecies, the whip and the nails, the death and the burial, the shame and the smart, the cross and the grave, of Jesus, shall be laid upon thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies and design of all their holy ends and purposes. And if we remember what a calamity that was, which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when Christ came to judge them, for their murdering him who was their king and the prince of life; and consider, that this was but a dark image of the terrors of the day of judgment; we may then apprehend, that there is some strange unspeakable evil that attends them that are guilty of this death and of so much evil to their Lord. Now it is certain, if thou wilt not be saved by his death, thou art guilty of his death; if thou wilt not suffer him to save thee, thou art guilty of destroying him: and then let it be considered, what is to be expected from that Judge, before whom you stand as his murderer and betrayer. But this is but half of that consideration.

2. Christ may be "crucified again," and upon a new account "put to an open shame." For after that Christ had done all this by the direct actions of his priestly office of sacrificing himself for us, he hath also done very many things for us, which are also the fruits of his first love and prosecution of our redemption. I will not instance in the strange arts of mercy that our Lord uses to bring us to live holy lives; but I consider that things

are so ordered, and so great a value set upon our souls, since they are the images of God and redeemed by the blood of the holy Lamb, that the salvation of our souls is reckoned as a part of Christ's reward, a part of the glorification of his humanity. Every sinner that repents causes joy to Christ, and the joy is so great that it runs over and wets the fair brows and beautiful locks of cherubim and seraphim, and all the angels have a part of that banquet; then it is that our blessed Lord feels the fruits of his holy death, the acceptance of his holy sacrifice, the graciousness of his person, the return of his prayers. For all that Christ did or suffered, and all that he now does as a priest in heaven, is to glorify his Father by bringing souls to God: for this it was that he was born and died, and that he descended from heaven to earth, from life to death, from the cross to the grave; this was the purpose of his resurrection and ascension, of the end and design of all the miracles and graces of God manifested to all the world by him. And now what man is so vile, such a malicious fool, that will refuse to bring joy to his Lord by doing himself the greatest good in the world? They who refuse to do this, are said to "crucify the Lord of life again, and put him to an open shame:" that is, they, as much as in them lies, bring Christ from his glorious joys to the labours of his life, and the shame of his death; they advance his enemies, and refuse to advance the kingdom of their Lord; they put themselves in that state, in which they were when Christ came to die for them; and now that he is in a state that he may rejoice over them (for he hath done all his share towards it), every wicked man takes his head from the blessing, and rather chooses that the devil should rejoice in his destruction, than that his Lord should triumph in his felicity. And now upon the supposition of these premises we may imagine, that it will be an infinite amazement to meet the Lord to be our judge, whose person we have murdered, whose honour we have disparaged, whose purposes we have destroyed, whose joys we have lessened, whose passion we have made ineffectual, and whose love we have trampled under our profane and impious feet.

3. But there is yet a third part of this consideration. As it will be inquired at the day of judgment concerning the dishonours to the person of Christ, so also concerning the profession and institution of Christ, and concerning his poor members; for by these also we make sad reflections upon our Lord. Every man that lives wickedly disgraces the religion and institution of Jesus, he discourages strangers from entering into it, he weakens the hands of them that are in already, and makes that the adversaries speak reproachfully of the name of Christ; but although it is certain our Lord and judge will deeply resent all these things, yet there is one thing which he takes more tenderly, and that is, the uncharitableness of men towards his poor; it shall then be upbraided to them by the Judge, that himself was hungry, and they refused to give meat to him that gave them his body and heart-blood to feed them and quench their thirst: that they denied a robe to cover his nakedness, and yet he would have clothed their souls with the robe of his righteousness, lest their souls should be found naked in the day of the Lord's visitation; and all this unkindness is nothing but that evil men were uncharitable to their brethren, they would not feed the hungry, nor give drink to the thirsty, nor clothe the naked, nor relieve their brother's needs, nor forgive his follies, nor cover their shame, nor turn their eyes from delighting in their affronts and evil accidents; this is it which our Lord will take so tenderly, that his brethren, for whom he died, who

sucked the paps of his mother, that fed on his body and are nourished with his blood, whom he hath lodged in his heart and entertains in his bosom, the partners of his spirit and co-heirs of his inheritance, that these should be denied relief and suffered to go away ashamed and unpitied ; this our blessed Lord will take so ill, that all those who are guilty of this unkindness have no reason to expect the favour of the court.

4. To this if we add the almightiness of the Judge, his infinite wisdom and knowledge of all causes and all persons and all circumstances, that he is infinitely just, inflexibly angry, and impartial in his sentence, there can be nothing added either to the greatness or to the requisites of a terrible and an almighty Judge. For who can resist him who is almighty ? Who can evade his scrutiny that knows all things ? Who can hope for pity of him that is inflexible ? Who can think to be exempted when the judge is righteous and impartial ? But in all these annexes of the great Judge, that which I shall now remark, is that indeed which hath terror in it, and that is the severity of our Lord. For then is the day of vengeance and recompences, and no mercy at all shall be showed but to them that are the sons of mercy ; for the other, their portion is such as can be expected from these premises.

1. If we remember the instances of God's severity in this life, in the days of mercy and repentance, in those days when judgment waits upon mercy and receives laws by the rules and measures of pardon, and that for all the rare streams of loving-kindness issuing out of paradise and refreshing all our fields with a moisture more fruitful than the floods of Nilus, still there are mingled some storms and violences, some fearful instances of the Divine justice ; we may more readily expect it will be worse, infinitely worse, at that day when judgment shall ride in triumph, and mercy shall be the accuser of the wicked. But so we read and are commanded to remember, because they are written for our example, that God destroyed at once five cities of the plain and all the country ; and Sodom and her sisters are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Fearful it was when God destroyed at once twenty-three thousand for fornication, and an exterminating angel in one night killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians, and the first-born of all the families of Egypt, and for the sin of David in numbering the people, threescore and ten thousand of the people died, and God sent ten tribes into captivity and eternal oblivion and indistinction from a common people for their idolatry. Did not God strike Korah and his company with fire from heaven ? and the earth opened and swallowed up the congregation of Abiram ? And is no evil come upon all the world for one sin of Adam ? Did not the anger of God break the nation of the Jews all in pieces with judgments so great, that no nation ever suffered the like, because none ever sinned so ! And at once it was done that God in anger destroyed all the whole world, and eight persons only escaped the angry baptism of water ; and yet this world is the time of mercy ; God hath opened here his magazines, and sent his only Son as the great fountain of it too : here he delights in mercy, and in judgment loves to remember it, and it triumphs over all his works, and God contrives instruments and accidents, chances and designs, occasions and opportunities, for mercy : if therefore now the anger of God make such terrible eruptions upon the wicked people that delight in sin, how great may we suppose that anger to be, how severe that judgment, how terrible that ven-

geance, how intolerable those inflictions, which God reserves for the full effusion of indignation on the great day of vengeance ?

2. We may also guess at it by this ; if God upon all single instances, and in the midst of our sins before they are come to the full, and sometimes in the beginning of an evil habit, be so fierce in his anger ; what can we imagine it to be in that day, when the wicked are to drink the dregs of that horrid potion, and count over all the particulars of their whole treasure of wrath ? “ This is the day of wrath, and God shall reveal or bring forth his righteous judgments.”*—For so did the Libyan lion that was brought up under discipline, and taught to endure blows, and eat the meat of order and regular provision, and to suffer gentle usages and the familiarities of societies ; but once he brake out into his own wilderness, and killed two Roman boys ; but those that forage in the Libyan mountains, tread down and devour all that they meet or master ; and when they have fasted two days, lay up an anger great as is their appetite, and bring certain death to all that can be overcome. God is pleased to compare himself to a lion ; and though in this life he hath confined himself with promises and gracious emanations of an infinite goodness, and limits himself by conditions and covenants, and suffers himself to be overcome by prayers, and himself hath invented ways of atonement and expiation ; yet when he is provoked by our unhandsome and unworthy actions, he makes sudden breaches, and tears some of us in pieces ; and of others he breaks their bones or affrights their hopes and secular gayeties, and fills their house with mourning and cypress, and groans and death ; but when this lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear upon his own mountain, the mountain of the Lord, in his natural dress of majesty, and that justice shall have her chain and golden fetters taken off, then justice shall strike, and mercy shall not hold her hands ; she shall strike sore strokes, and pity shall not break the blow ; and God shall account with us by minutes, and for words, and for thoughts ; and then he shall be severe to mark what is done amiss ; and that justice may reign entirely, God shall open the wicked man's treasure, and tell the sums and weigh grains and scruples : as there are treasures of good things, and God hath crowns and sceptres in store for his saints and servants, and coronets for martyrs, and rosaries for virgins, and phials full of prayers, and bottles full of tears, and a register of sighs and penitential groans : so God hath a treasure of wrath and fury, and scourges and scorpions ; and then shall be produced the shame of lust, and the malice of envy, and the groans of the oppressed, and the persecutions of the saints, and the cares of covetousness, and the troubles of ambition, and the insolences of traitors, and the violences of rebels, and the rage of anger, and the uneasiness of impatience, and the restlessness of unlawful desires ; and by this time the monsters and diseases will be numerous and intolerable, when God's heavy hand shall press the *sanies* and the intolerableness, the obliquity and the unreasonableness, the amazement and the disorder, the smart and the sorrow, the guilt and the punishment, out from all our sins, and pour them into one chalice, and mingle them with an infinite wrath, and make the wicked drink off all the vengeance, and force it down their unwilling throats, with the violence of devils and accursed spirits.

3. We may guess at the severity of the Judge by the lesser strokes of

* Rom. ii. 5.

that judgment ; which he is pleased to send upon sinners in this world, to make them afraid of the horrible pains of doomsday : I mean the torments of an unquiet conscience, the amazement and confusions of some sins and some persons. For I have sometimes seen persons surprised in a base action, and taken in the circumstances of crafty theft and secret injustices, before their excuse was ready ; they have changed their colour, their speech hath faltered, their tongue stammered, their eyes did wander and fix no where, till shame made them sink into their hollow eye-pits, to retreat from their images and circumstances of discovery ; their wits are lost, their reason useless, the whole order of the soul is discomposed, and they neither see, nor feel, nor think, as they used to do, but they are broken into disorder by a stroke of damnation and a lesser stripe of hell ; but then if you come to observe a guilty and a base murderer, a condemned traitor, and see him harassed, first by an evil conscience, and then pulled in pieces by the hangman's hooks, or broken upon sorrows and the wheel, we may then guess (as well as we can in this life) what the pains of that day shall be to accursed souls ; but those we shall consider afterwards in their proper scene ; now only we are to estimate the severity of our Judge by the intolerableness of an evil conscience ; if guilt will make a man despair, and despair will make a man mad, confounded and dissolved in all the regions of his senses and more noble faculties, that he shall neither feel, nor hear, nor see, any thing but spectres and illusions, devils and frightful dreams, and hear noises, and shriek fearfully, and look pale and distracted, like a hopeless man, from the horrors and confusions of a lost battle, upon which all his hopes did stand ; then the wicked must at the day of judgment expect strange things and fearful, and such which now no language can express, and then no patience can endure.

Then only it can truly be said, that he is inflexible and inexorable. No prayers then can move him, no groans can cause him to pity thee ; therefore pity thyself in time, that when the Judge comes, thou mayest be one of the sons of everlasting mercy, to whom pity belongs as part of thine inheritance.

SOME INSTANCES OF THE CHANGE

WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE OPINIONS OF MEN AT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

THE pharisees believed that they were innocent, if they abstained from criminal actions, such as were punishable by the judge ; and many christians think all is well with them, if they abstain from such sins as have a name in the tables of their laws ; but because some sins are secret and not discernible to man ; others are public but not punished, because they were frequent and perpetual, and without external mischiefs in some instances, and only provocations against God ; men think that in their concerns they have no place : and such are jeering, and many instances of wantonness and revelling, doing petty spites, and rudeness, and churlishness, lying and pride : and beyond this, some are very like virtues ; as too much gentleness and slackness in government, or too great severity and rigour of

animadversion, bitterness in reproof of sinners, uncivil circumstances, imprudent handlings of some criminals, and zeal ; nay, there are some vile things, which, through the evil discouragements and worse manners of men, are passed into an artificial and false reputation, and men accounted wits for talking atheistically, and valiant for being murderers, and wise for deceiving and circumventing our brothers ; and many irregularities more, for all which we are safe enough here. But when the day of judgment comes, these shall be called to a severe account, for the Judge is omniscient and knows all things, and his tribunal takes cognizance of all causes, and hath a coercive for all, “ all things are naked and open to his eyes,” saith St Paul ;* therefore nothing shall escape for being secret—He shall judge concerning those judgments which men here make of things below ; and the fighting men shall perceive the noise of drunkards and fools that cried him up for daring to kill his brother, to have been evil principles ; and then it will be declared by strange effects, that wealth is not the greatest fortune ; and ambition was but an ill counsellor ; and to lie for a good cause was no piety : and to do evil for the glory of God was but an ill worshipping him : and that good-nature was not well employed, when it spent itself in vicious company and evil compliances ; and that piety was not softness and want of courage ; and that poverty ought not to have been contemptible ; and that the cause that is unsuccessful, is not therefore evil ; and what is folly here shall be wisdom there ; then shall men curse their evil guides, and their accursed superinduced necessities and the evil guises of the world ; and then when silence shall be found innocence, and eloquence in many instances condemned as criminal ; when the poor shall reign, and generals and tyrants shall lie low in horrible regions ; when he that lost all shall find a treasure, and he that spoiled him shall be found naked and spoiled by the destroyer ; then we shall find it true, that we ought here to have done what our Judge, our blessed Lord, shall do there, that is, take our measures of good and evil by the severities of the word of God, by the sermons of Christ and the four gospels, and by the epistles of St Paul, by justice and charity, by the laws of God, and the laws of wise princes and republics, by the rules of nature, and the just proportions of reason, by the examples of good men and the proverbs of wise men, by severity and the rules of discipline : for then it shall be, that truth shall ride in triumph, and the holiness of Christ’s sermons shall be manifest to all the world ; that the word of God shall be advanced over all the discourses of men, and “ wisdom shall be justified by all her children.” Then shall be heard those words of an evil and tardy repentance, and the just rewards of folly. “ We fools thought their life madness ;” but behold they are justified before the throne of God, and we are miserable for ever. Here men think it strange if others will not run into the same excess of riot ; but there, they will wonder how themselves should be so mad and infinitely unsafe, by being strangely and inexcusably unreasonable.

The sum is this, the Judge shall appear clothed with wisdom, and power, and justice, and knowledge, and an impartial spirit, making no separations by the proportions of this world, but by the measures of God ; not giving sentence by the principles of our folly and evil customs, but by the severity of his own laws and measures of the Spirit. “ God does not judge as man judges.”

* Heb. iv. 13.

THE SUCCESS OF A GOOD MAN'S PRAYERS

HINDERED BY THE INDULGENCE OF ANGER.

THE first thing that hinders the prayer of a good man from obtaining its effects is a violent anger, and a violent storm in the spirit of him that prays. For anger sets the house on fire, and all the spirits are busy upon trouble, and intend propulsion, defence, displeasure, or revenge ; it is a short madness, and an eternal enemy to discourse, and sober counsels, and fair conversation ; it intends its own object with all the earnestness of perception, or activity of design, and a quicker motion of a too warm and distempered blood ; it is a fever in the heart, and a calenture in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over ; and therefore can never suffer a man to be in a disposition to pray. For prayer is an action, and a state of intercourse and desire, exactly contrary to this character of anger. Prayer is an action of likeness to the Holy Ghost, the spirit of gentleness and dove-like simplicity ; an imitation of the holy Jesus, whose spirit is meek, up to the greatness of the biggest example, and a conformity to God ; whose anger is always just, and marches slowly, and is without transportation, and often hindered, and is never hasty, and is full of mercy : prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest ; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts, it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness ; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a barrel to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier-garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention, which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds ; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings ; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over ; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministries here below : so is the prayer of a good man ; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with the infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent and raised a tempest, and overruled the man ; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention ; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made

even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God ; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, laden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.

But besides this ; anger is a combination of many other things, every one of which is an enemy to prayer ; It hath in it the trouble of sorrow, and the heats of lust, and the disease of revenge, and the boilings of a fever, and the rashness of precipitancy, and the disturbance of persecution ; and therefore is a certain effective enemy against prayer ; which ought to be a spiritual joy, and an act of mortification ; and to have in it no heats, but of charity and zeal ; and they are to be guided by prudence and consideration, and allayed with the deliciousness of mercy, and the serenity of a meek and a quiet spirit ; and therefore St Paul gave caution, that “ the sun should not go down upon our anger,” meaning, that it should not stay upon us till evening prayer ; for it would hinder our evening sacrifice ; but the stopping of the first egressions of anger, is a certain artifice of the Spirit of God, to prevent unmercifulness, which turns not only our desires into vanity, but our prayers into sin ; and, remember, that Elisha’s anger, though it was also zeal, had so discomposed his spirit, when the two kings came to inquire of the Lord, that though he was a good man and a prophet, yet he could not pray, he could not inquire of the Lord, till by rest and music he had gathered himself into the evenness of a dispassionate and recollected mind ; therefore, let your prayers be without wrath.

THE SUCCESS OF PRAYER HINDERED

BY LUKEWARMNESS OF FEELING.

INDIFFERENCY and easiness of desire is a great enemy to the good man’s prayer. When Plato gave Diogenes a great vessel of wine, who asked but a little, and a few caraways, the Cynic thanked him with this rude expression : “ Thou neither answerest to the question thou art asked, nor givest according as thou art desired : being inquired of, how many are two and two, thou answerest twenty.” So it is with God and us in the intercourse of our prayers : we pray for health, and he gives us, it may be, a sickness that carries us into eternal life ; we pray for necessary support for our persons and families, and he gives us more than we need ; we beg for a removal of a present sadness, and he gives that which makes us able to bear twenty sadnesses, a cheerful spirit, a peaceful conscience, and a joy in God, as an antepast of eternal rejoicings in the kingdom of God. But then, although God doth very frequently give us beyond the matter of our desires, yet he does not so often give us great things beyond the spirit of our desires, beyond the quickness, vivacity, and fervour of our minds :—St James, in his accounts concerning an effective prayer, not only requires that he be a just man who prays, but his prayer must be fervent ; “ an effectual fervent prayer ;” it must be an intent, zealous, busy, operative prayer ; for, consider what a huge indecency it is, that a man should speak to God for a thing that he values not ; or that he should not value a

thing, without which he cannot be happy ; or that he should spend his religion upon a trifle ; and if it be not a trifle, that he should not spend his affections upon it. If our prayers be for temporal things, I shall not need stir up your affections to be passionate for their purchase ; we desire them greedily, we run after them intemperately, we are kept from them with huge impatience, we are delayed with infinite regrets ; we prefer them before our duty, we ask them unseasonably ; we receive them with our own prejudice, and we care not ; we choose them to our hurt and hinderance, and yet delight in the purchase ; and when we do pray for them, we can hardly bring ourselves to it, to submit to God's will, but will have them (if we can) whether he be pleased or no ; But, then, for spiritual things, for the interest of our souls, and the affairs of the kingdom, we pray to God with just such a zeal, as a man begs of a chirurgeon to cut him of the stone ; or a condemned man desires his executioner quickly to put him out of his pain, by taking away his life ; when things are come to that pass it must be done, but God knows with what little complacency and desire the man makes his request : and yet the things of religion and the Spirit are the only things that ought to be desired vehemently, and pursued passionately, because God hath set such a value upon them, that they are the effects of his greatest loving-kindness ; they are the purchases of Christ's blood, and the effect of his continual intercession, the fruits of his bloody sacrifice, and the gifts of his healing and saving mercy ; the graces of God's Spirit, and the only instruments of felicity : and if we can have fondnesses for things indifferent or dangerous, our prayers upbraid our spirits, when we beg coldly and tamely for those things, for which we ought to die, which are more precious than the globes of kings, and weightier than imperial sceptres, richer than the spoils of the sea, or the treasures of the Indian hills.

He that is cold and tame in his prayers, hath not tasted of the deliciousness of religion and the goodness of God ; he is a stranger to the secrets of the kingdom, and therefore he does not know what it is, either to have hunger or satiety ; and therefore, neither are they hungry for God, nor satisfied with the world ; but remain stupid and inapprehensive, without resolution and determination, never choosing clearly, nor pursuing earnestly, and therefore never enter into possession ; but always stand at the gate of weariness, unnecessary caution, and perpetual irresolution. But so it is too often in our prayers ; we come to God because it is civil so to do, and a general custom, but neither drawn thither by love, nor pinched by spiritual necessities, and pungent apprehensions ; we say so many prayers, because we are resolved so to do, and we pass through them, sometimes with a little attention, sometimes with none at all.—But let us remember that every prayer we make, is considered by God, and recorded in heaven ; but cold prayers are not put into the account, in order to effect and acceptance ; but are laid aside like the buds of roses, which a cold wind hath nipped into death, and the discoloured tawny face of an Indian slave : and when in order to your hopes of obtaining a great blessing, you reckon up your prayers, with which you have solicited your suit in the court of heaven, you must reckon, not by the number of the collects, but by your sighs and passions, by the vehemence of your desires, and the fervour of your spirit, the apprehension of your need, and the consequent prosecution of your supply. Christ prayed “with loud cryings,” and St Paul made mention of his scholars in his prayers “night and day.” Fall

upon your knees and grow there, and let not your desires cool nor your zeal remit, but renew it again and again, and let not your offices and the custom of praying put thee in mind of thy need, but let thy need draw thee to thy holy offices; and remember, how great a God, how glorious a Majesty you speak to; therefore, let not your devotions and addresses be little. Remember, how great a need thou hast; let not your desires be less. Remember, how great the thing is you pray for; do not undervalue it with any indifferency. Remember, that prayer is an act of religion; let it, therefore, be made thy business: and, lastly, Remember that God hates a cold prayer: and, therefore, will never bless it, but it shall be always ineffectual.

EXPOSITION OF THE LATTER PART OF HEB. XII.

“LET us have grace,” so our Testaments usually read it, but some copies read in the indicative mood, “We have grace, by which we do serve;” and it is something better consonant to the discourse of the Apostle. For having enumerated the great advantages, which the Gospel hath above those of the law, he makes an argument “a majori;” and answers a tacit objection. The law was delivered by angels, but the Gospel by the Son of God: the law was delivered from Mount Sinai, the Gospel from Mount Sion, from “the heavenly Jerusalem:” the law was given with terrors and noises, with amazements of the standers-by, and Moses himself, “the minister, did exceedingly quake and fear,” and gave demonstration how infinitely dangerous it was by breaking that law to provoke so mighty a God, who with his voice did shake the earth: but the Gospel was given by a meek Prince, a gentle Saviour, with a still voice, scarce heard in the streets. But that this may be no objection, he proceeds and declares the terror of the Lord: ‘Deceive not yourselves, our Lawgiver appeared so upon earth, and was so truly, but now he is ascended into heaven, and from thence he speaks to us.’ “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven;”* for as God once shook the earth, and that was full of terror, so our “Lawgiver shall do, and much more and be far more terrible, “yet once more I will shake the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land,” said the prophet Haggai, which the Apostle quotes here. He once shook the earth; But “once more I shake; not the earth only, but also heaven,”† with a greater terror than was upon Mount Sinai, with the voice of an archangel, with the trump of God, with a concussion so great, that heaven and earth shall be shaken in pieces, and new ones come in their room. This is an unspeakable and an unimaginable terror: Mount Sinai was shaken, but it stands to this day; but when that shaking shall be, “the things that are shaken, shall be no more; that those things that cannot be shaken, may remain:” that is, not only that the celestial Jerusalem may

* Heb. xii. 25.

† Hag. ii. 6.

remain for ever, but that you, who do not turn away from the faith and obedience of the Lord Jesus, you, who cannot be shaken nor removed from your duty, you may remain for ever ; that when the rocks rend, and the mountains fly in pieces like the drops of a broken cloud, and the heavens shall melt, and the sun shall be a globe of consuming fire, and the moon shall be dark like an extinguished candle, then you poor men, who could be made to tremble with an ague, or shake by the violence of a northern wind, or be removed from your dwellings by the unjust decree of a persecutor, or be thrown from your estates by the violence of an unjust man, yet could not be removed from your duty, and though you went trembling, yet would go to death for the testimony of a holy cause, and you that would die for your faith, would also live according to it ; you shall be established by the power of God, and supported by the arm of your Lord, and shall in all this great shaking be unmoveable ; as the corner-stone of the gates of the New Jerusalem, you shall remain and abide for ever. This is your case. And, to sum up the whole force of the argument, the Apostle adds the words of Moses : as it was then, so is it true now, “ Our God is a consuming fire :” he was so to them that brake the law, but he will be much more to them that disobey his Son ; he made great changes then, but those which remain are far greater, and his terrors are infinitely more intolerable ; and therefore, although he came not in the spirit of Elias, but with meekness and gentle insinuations, soft as the breath of heaven, not willing to disturb the softest stalk of a violet, yet his second coming shall be with terrors such as shall amaze all the world, and dissolve it into ruin and a chaos. This truth is of so great efficacy to make us do our duty, that now we are sufficiently enabled with this consideration. This is the grace which we have to enable us, this terror will produce fear, and fear will produce obedience, and “ we therefore have grace,” that is, we have such a motive to make us reverence God and fear to offend him that he that dares continue in sin, and refuses to hear him that speaks to us from heaven, and from thence shall come with terrors, this man despises the grace of God, he is a graceless, fearless, impudent man, and he shall find that true in his own ruin, which the Apostle declares by way of caution, and provisionary terror, “ Our God is a consuming fire.”

USE AND ABUSE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF FEAR IN RELIGION.

FEAR is the duty we owe to God, as being the God of power and justice, the great Judge of heaven and earth, the avenger of the cause of widows, the patron of the poor, and the advocate of the oppressed, a mighty God and terrible : and so essential an enemy to sin, that he spared not his own Son, but gave him over to death, and to become a sacrifice, when he took upon him our nature, and became a person obliged for our guilt. Fear is the great bridle of intemperance, the modesty of the spirit, and the restraint of gayeties and dissolutions ; it is the girdle to the soul, and the

handmaid to repentance ; the arrest in sin, and the cure or antidote to the spirit of reprobation ; it preserves our apprehensions of the Divine Majesty, and hinders our single actions from combining to sinful habits ; it is the mother of consideration, and the nurse of sober counsels ; and it puts the soul to fermentation and activity, making it to pass from trembling to caution, from caution to carefulness, from carefulness to watchfulness, from thence to prudence ; and, by the gates and progresses of repentance, it leads the soul on to love, and to felicity, and to joys in God, that shall never cease again. Fear is the guard of a man in the days of prosperity and it stands upon the watch towers and spies the approaching danger, and gives warning to them that laugh loud, and feast in the chambers of rejoicing, where a man cannot consider by reason of the noises of wine, and jest, and music ; and if prudence takes it by the hand, and leads it on to duty, it is a state of grace, and a universal instrument to infant religion, and the only security of less perfect persons ; and, in all senses, is that homage we owe to God, who sends often to demand it, even then, when he speaks in thunder or smites by a plague, or awakens us by threatenings, or discomposes our easiness by sad thoughts, and tender eyes, and fearful hearts, and trembling considerations.

But this so excellent grace is soon abused in the best and most tender spirits ; in those who are softened by nature and by religion, by infelicities or cares, by sudden accidents or a sad soul ; and the devil observing, that fear, like spare diet, starves the fevers of lust, and quenches the flames of hell, endeavours to heighten this abstinence so much as to starve the man, and break the spirit into timorousness and scruple, sadness and unreasonable tremblings, credulity and trifling observation, suspicion and false accusations of God ; and then vice, being turned out of the gate, returns in at the postern, and does the work of hell and death by running too inconsiderately in the paths, which seem to lead to heaven. But so have I seen a harmless dove, made dark with an artificial night, and her eyes sealed and locked up with a little quill, soaring upward and flying with amazement, fear, and an undiscerning wing ; she made towards heaven, but knew not that she was made a train and an instrument, to teach her enemy to prevail upon her and all her defenceless kindred : so is a superstitious man, zealous and blind, forward and mistaken, he runs towards heaven as he thinks, but he chooses foolish paths ; and out of fear takes any thing that he is told ; or fancies and guesses concerning God by measures taken from his own diseases and imperfections.—But that the evil may be proportionable to the folly, and the punishment to the crime, there is no man more miserable in the world than the man who fears God as his enemy, and religion as a snare, and duty as intolerable, and the commandments as impossible, and his Judge as implacable, and his anger as certain, insufferable, and unavoidable : whither shall this man go ? where shall he lay his burden ? where shall he take sanctuary ? for he fears the altars as the places where his soul bleeds and dies ; and God, who is his Saviour, he looks upon as his enemy ; and, because he is Lord of all, the miserable man cannot change his service, unless it be apparently for a worse. And therefore, of all the evils of the mind, fear, is certainly the worst and the most intolerable : levity and rashness have in them some spitefulness, and greatness of action ; anger is valiant ; desire is busy and apt to hope ; credulity is oftentimes entertained and pleased with images and appearances ; but

fear is dull, and sluggish, and treacherous, and flattering, and dissembling, and miserable, and foolish. Every false opinion concerning God is pernicious and dangerous ; but if it be joined with trouble of spirit, as fear, scruple, and superstition are,—it is like a wound with an inflammation, or a strain of a sinew with a contusion or contrition of the part, painful and unsafe ; it puts on two actions when itself is driven ; it urges reason and circumscribes it, and makes it pitiable, and ridiculous in its consequent follies ; which, if we consider it, will sufficiently reprove the folly, and declare the danger.—The sum is this ;—our fears are to be measured by open revelation and certain experience, by the threatenings of God and the sayings of wise men, and their limit is reverence, and godliness is their end ; and then fear shall be a duty, and a rare instrument of many : in all other cases it is superstition or folly, it is sin or punishment, the ivy of religion, and the misery of an honest and a weak heart ; and is to be cured only by reason and good company, a wise guide and a plain rule, a cheerful spirit and a contented mind, by joy in God according to the commandments, that is, “ a rejoicing evermore.”

THE PERVERSENESS OF SINNERS.

FROM the beginning of days, man hath been so cross to the Divine commandments, that in many cases there can be no reason given, why a man should choose some ways, or do some actions, but only because they are forbidden. When God bade the Israelites rise and go up against the Canaanites and possess the Land, they would not stir ; the men were Anakims, and the cities were impregnable ; and there was a lion in the way ; but, presently after, when God forbade them to go, they would and did go, though they died for it. I shall not need to instance in particular, when the whole life of man is a perpetual contradiction ; and the state of disobedience is called the contradiction of sinners ;” even the man in the Gospel, that had two sons ; they both crossed him, even he that obeyed him, and he that obeyed him not : for the one said he would, and did not ; the other said he would not, and did ; and so do we : we promise fair, and do nothing ; and they that do best, are such as come out of darkness into light, such as said “ they would not,” and at last have better bethought themselves. And who can guess at any other reason, why men should refuse to be temperate ? For he that refuseth the commandment, first does violence to the commandment, and puts on a preternatural appetite ; he spoils his health and he spoils his understanding ; he brings to himself a world of diseases and a healthless constitution ; smart and sickly nights ; a loathing stomach and a staring eye, a giddy brain and a swelled belly, gouts and dropsies ; catarrhs and oppilations. If God should enjoin men to suffer all this, heaven and earth should have heard our complaints against unjust laws, and impossible commandments ; for we complain already, even when God commands us to drink so long as it is good for us ; this is one of the impossible laws : it is impossible for us to know when we are dry, or when we need drink ; for if we do know, I am sure it is possible enough,

not to lift up the wine to our heads. And when our blessed Saviour hath commanded us to love our enemies, we think we have so much reason against it, that God will easily excuse our disobedience in this case ; and yet there are some enemies, whom God hath commanded us not to love, and those we dote on, we cherish and feast them, and as St Paul in another case, “ upon our uncomely parts we bestow more abundant comeliness.” For whereas our body itself is a servant to our soul, we make it an heir of all things, and treat it here already, as if it were in majority ; and make that, which at the best was but a weak friend, to become a strong enemy ; and hence proceed the vices of the worst, and the follies and imperfections of the best : the spirit is either in slavery or in weakness, and when the flesh is not strong to mischief, it is weak to goodness ; and even to the apostles our blessed Lord said, “ The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

EFFECTS OF SICKNESS ON THE MIND.

WE carry about us the body of death, and we bring evils upon ourselves by our follies, and then know not how to bear them ; and the flesh forsakes the spirit. And, indeed, in sickness the infirmity is so very great, that God in a manner at that time hath reduced all religion into one virtue ; patience with its appendages is the sum total of almost all our duty that is proper to the days of sorrow ; and we shall find it enough to entertain all our powers, and to employ all our aids ; the counsels of wise men and the comforts of our friends, the advices of Scripture and the results of experience, the graces of God, and the strength of our own resolutions, are all then full of employment, and find it work enough to secure that one grace. For then it is, that a cloud is wrapped about our heads, and our reason stoops under sorrow ; the soul is sad, and its instrument is out of tune ; the auxiliaries are disordered, and every thought sits heavily ; then a comfort cannot make the body feel it, and the soul is not so abstracted to rejoice much without its partner ; so that the proper joys of the soul,—such as are hope, and wise discourses, and satisfaction of reason, and the offices of religion,—are felt, just as we now perceive the joys of heaven, with so little relish, that it comes as news of a victory to a man upon the rack, or the birth of an heir to one condemned to die ; he hears a story, which was made to delight him, but it came when he was dead to joy, and all its capacities ; and, therefore, sickness, though it be a good monitor, yet it is an ill stage to act some virtues in ; and a good man cannot then do much ; and, therefore, he that is in a state of flesh and blood, can do nothing at all.

FAITH.

THE primary instrument of changing our whole nature into the state of grace, flesh into the spirit, is a firm belief, and a perfect assent to, and hearty entertainment of, the promises of the gospel ; for Holy Scrip-

ture speaks great words concerning faith. “It quenches the fiery darts of the devil,” saith St Paul;* “it overcomes the world,” saith St John;† it is the fruit of the Spirit, and the parent of love; it is obedience, and it is humility, it is a shield, and it is a breastplate, and a work, and a mystery, it is a fight, and it is a victory, it is pleasing to God, and it is that “whereby the just do live;” by “faith we are purified,” and by “faith we are sanctified,” and by “faith we are justified,” and by “faith we are saved,” by this “we have access to the throne of grace,” and by it our prayers shall prevail “for the sick,” by it we stand, and by it we walk, and by this “Christ dwells in our hearts,” and by it all the miracles of the church have been done; it gives great patience to suffer, and great confidence to hope, and great strength to do, and infallible certainty to enjoy the end of all our faith, and satisfaction of all our hopes, and the reward of all our labours, even “the most mighty prize of our high calling:” and if faith be such a magazine of spiritual excellences, of such universal efficacy, nothing can be a greater antidote against the venom of a corrupted nature. But then this is not a grace seated finally in the understanding, but the principle that is designed to, and actually productive of, a holy life; it is not only a believing the propositions of Scripture as we believe a proposition in the metaphysics, concerning which a man is never the honestest whether it be true or false; but it is a belief of things that concern us infinitely, things so great that if they be so true as great, no man that hath his reason and can discourse, that can think and choose, that can desire and work towards an end, can possibly neglect them. The great object of our faith, to which all other articles do minister, is the resurrection of our bodies and souls to eternal life, and glories infinite. Now is it possible that a man that believes this, and that he may obtain it for himself, and that it was prepared for him, and that God desires to give it him,—that he can neglect and despise it, and not work for it, and perform such easy conditions upon which it may be obtained? Are not most men of the world made miserable at a less price than a thousand pounds a year? Do not all the usurers and merchants, all tradesmen and labourers under the sun toil and care, labour and contrive, venture and plot, for a little money? and no man gets, and scarce any man desires, so much of it as he can lay upon three acres of ground; not so much as will fill a great house. And is this sum, that is such a trifle, such a poor limited heap of dirt, the reward of all the labour and the end of all the care, and the design of all the malice, and the recompense of all the wars, of the world; and can it be imaginable, that life itself, and a long life, an eternal and happy life, a kingdom, a perfect kingdom, and glorious that shall never have ending, nor ever shall be abated with rebellion, or fears, or sorrow, or care; that such a kingdom should not be worth the praying for, and quitting of an idle company, and a foolish humour, or a little drink, or a vicious silly woman, for it? Surely men believe no such thing: they do not rely upon those fine stories that are read in books, and published by preachers, and allowed by the laws of all the world. If they did, why do they choose intemperance and a fever, lust and shame, rebellion and danger, pride and a fall, sacrilege and a curse, gain and passion, before humility, and safety, religion and a constant joy, devotion and peace of conscience, justice and a quiet dwelling, charity and a blessing; and, at the end of all

* Ephes. iv. 4. 16.

† John iv. 5.

this, a kingdom more glorious than all the beauties of the sun did ever see. "Faith is a certain image of eternity, all things are present to it, things past and things to come," are all so before the eyes of faith, that he in whose eye that candle is enkindled, beholds heaven as present, and sees how blessed a thing it is to die in God's favour, and to be chimed to our grave with the music of a good conscience. Faith converses with the angels, and antedates the hymns of glory : every man that hath this grace, is as certain that there are glories for him, if he perseveres in duty, as if he had heard and sung the thanksgiving-song for the blessed sentence of doomsday. And therefore it is no matter, if these things are separate and distant objects ; none but children and fools are taken with the present trifle, and neglect a distant blessing, of which they have credible and believed notices. Did the merchant see the pearls and the wealth he designed to get in the trade of twenty years ? And is it possible that a child should, when he learns the first rudiments of grammar, know what excellent things there are in learning, whither he designs his labour, and his hopes ? We labour for that which is uncertain, and distant, and believed, and hoped for with many allays, and seen with diminution, and a troubled ray ; and what excuse can there be that we do not labour for that, which is told us by God, and preached by his only Son, and confirmed by miracles, and which Christ himself died to purchase, and millions of martyrs died to witness, and which we see good men and wise believe with an assent stronger than their evidence, and which they do believe because they do love, and love because they do believe ? There is nothing to be said, but that faith which did enlighten the blind, and cleanse the lepers, and washed the soul of the *Æthiopian* ; that faith that cures the sick, and strengthens the paralytic, and baptizes the catechumens, and justifies the faithful, and repairs the penitent, and confirms the just, and crowns the martyrs ; that faith, if it be true and proper, Christian and alive, active and effective in us, is sufficient to appease the storm of our passions, and to instruct all our ignorances, and to make us wise unto salvation ; it will, if we let it do its first intention, chastise our errors, and discover our follies ; it will make us ashamed of trifling interests and violent prosecutions, of false principles and the evil disguises of the world ; and then our nature will return to the innocence and excellency in which God first estated it ; that is, our flesh will be a servant of the soul, and the soul a servant to the spirit ; and then, because faith makes heaven to be the end of our desires, and God the object of our love and worshippings, and the Scripture the rule of our actions, and Christ our Lord and master, and the Holy Spirit our mighty assistant and our counsellor, all the little uglinesses of the world, and the follies of the flesh, will be uneasy and unsavoury, unreasonable, and a load ; and then that grace, the grace of faith, that lays hold upon the holy Trinity, although it cannot understand it, and beholds heaven before it can possess it, shall also correct our weaknesses, and master all our adversations : and though we cannot in this world be perfect masters, and triumphant persons, yet we be conquerors and more ; that is, conquerors of the direct hostility, and sure of a crown to be revealed in its due time.

DEVOTION.

ONE great remedy of our evil nature, and of the loads of the flesh, is devotion, or a state of prayer and intercourse with God. For, the gift of the Spirit of God, which is the great antidote of our evil natures, is properly and expressly promised to prayer: "If you, who are evil, give good things to your children that ask you, how much more shall your Father from heaven give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it?" That which in St Luke* is called 'The Holy Spirit,' is called in St Matthew,† 'good things;' that is, the Holy Spirit is all that good that we shall need towards our pardon, and our sanctification, and our glory, and this is promised to prayer; to this purpose Christ taught us the Lord's Prayer, by which we are sufficiently instructed in obtaining this magazine of holy and useful things. But prayer is but one part of devotion, and though of admirable efficacy towards the obtaining this excellent promise, yet it is to be assisted by the other parts of devotion, to make it a perfect remedy to our great evil. He that would secure his evil nature, must be a devout person; and he that is devout, besides that he prays frequently, he delights in it as it is a conversation with God; he rejoices in God, and esteems him the light of his eyes, and the support of his confidence, the object of his love, and the desire of his heart; the man is uneasy, but when he does God service; and his soul is at peace and rest, when he does what may be accepted: and this is that which the Apostle counsels, and gives in precept; "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice;"‡ that is, as the Levites were appointed to rejoice, because God was their portion in tithes and offerings, so now that in the spiritual sense God is our portion, we should rejoice in him, and make him our inheritance, and his service our employment, and the peace of conscience to be our rest, and then it is impossible we should be any longer slaves to sin, and afflicted by the baser employments of the flesh, or carry burdens for the devil. "None but a wise and a good man," says Seneca, "can truly rejoice;" the evil laugh loud, and sigh deeply, they drink drunk, and forget their sorrows, and all the joys of evil men are only arts of forgetfulness, devices to cover their sorrow, and make them not see their death, and its affrighting circumstances; but the heart never can rejoice and be secure, be pleased and be at rest, but when it dwells with holiness: the joys that come from thence are safe and great, unchangeable and unabated, healthful and holy; and this is true joy: and this is that which can cure all the little images of pleasure and temptation, which debauch our nature, and make it dwell with hospitals, in the region of diseases and evil sorrows. St Gregory well observed the difference, saying that "corporeal pleasures, when we have them not, enkindle a flame and a burning desire in the heart, and make a man very miserable before he tastes them; the appetite to them is like the thirst and the desires of a fever;" the pleasure of drinking will not pay for the pain of the desire; and "when they are enjoyed, they instantly breed satiety and loathing. But spiritual rejoicings and delights are loathed by them that have them not, and despised by them that never felt them;" but when they are once tasted, they increase the appetite and swell into bigger capa-

* Luke xi. 13.

† Matt. vii. 11.

‡ Phil. iv. 4.

cities ; and the more they are eaten, the more they are desired ; and cannot become a weariness, because they satisfy all the way, and only increase the desire, because themselves grow bigger and more amiable. And therefore when this new and stranger appetite, and consequent joy arises in the heart of man, it so fills all the faculties, that there is no gust, no desire left for toads and vipers, for hemlock and the deadly nightshade. Then a man can hear the music of songs and dances, and think them to be heathenish noises ; and if he be engaged in the society of a woman-singer, he can be as unconcerned as a marble statue ; he can be at a feast and not be defiled, he can pass through theatres as through a street : then he can look on money as his servant ; he can use it as the Greeks did their sharp coins, to cast accounts withal, and not from thence take the accounts of his wealth or his felicity. If you can once obtain but to delight in prayer, and to long for the day of a communion, and to be pleased with holy meditation, and to desire God's grace with great passion, and an appetite keen as a wolf upon the void plains of the north ; if you can delight in God's love, and consider concerning his providence, and busy yourselves in the pursuit of the affairs of his kingdom, then you have the grace of devotion, and your evil nature shall be cured.

THE NECESSITY OF CULTIVATING THE GRACES OF TEMPERANCE AND CHASTITY,

IN ORDER TO THE VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT OVER THE FLESH.

BECAUSE this great cure is to be wrought by the Spirit of God, which is a new nature in us, we must endeavour to abstain from those things, which by a special malignity are directly opposite to the spirit of reason, and the Spirit of grace ; and those are drunkenness and lust. He that is full of wine, cannot be full of the Spirit of God : St Paul noteth the hostility ; " Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit : " * a man that is a drunkard perishes quickly, his temptations that come to him, make but short work with him. " Of all the evils of the world, nothing is worse to a man's self, nothing is more harmful than this ; " said Crobylus, " it deprives a wise man of his counsel and his understanding. " Now, because it is the greatest good that nature hath, that which takes it away, must needs be our greatest enemy. Nature is weak enough of itself, but drunkenness takes from it all the little strengths that are left to it, and destroys the Spirit ; and the man can neither have the strengths of nature, nor the strengths of grace ; and how then can the man do wisely or virtuously ? " The Spirit of God loves dry hearts, " said the Christian proverb ; the people holy unto the Lord, as Plutarch said of consecrated persons, must have " dry and sober purities : " for by this means their reason is useful, and their passions not violent, and their discourse united, and the precious things of their memory at hand, and they can pray and read, and they can meditate and practise, and then they can learn

* Ephes. v. 18.

where their natural weaknesses are most urgent, and how they can be tempted, and can secure their aids accordingly ; but how is it possible, that such a man should cure all the evils of his nature, and repair the breaches of Adam's sin, and stop all the effect which is upon him from all the evils of the world, if he delights in seas of drink, and is pleased with the follies of distempered persons, and laughs loud at the childish humours and weak discourses of the man, that can do nothing but that for which Dionysius slew Antiphon, and Timagenes did fall from Cæsar's friendship ; that is, play the fool and abuse his friend ; he cannot give good counsel or spend an hour in wise sayings ; but half a day he can talk to make the crowd laugh, and consider not.

And the same is the case of lust ; because it is exactly contrary to Christ the king of virgins, and his Holy Spirit, who is the prince of purities and holy thoughts ; it is a captivity of the reason, and an enraging of the passions, it wakens every night, and rages every day, it desires passionately, and prosecutes violently, it hinders business and distracts counsel, it brings jealousies and enkindles wars, it sins against the body, and weakens the soul, it defiles a temple, and drives the Holy Spirit forth, and it is so entire a prosecution of the follies and weaknesses of nature, such a snare and a bait to weak and easy fools, that it prevails infinitely, and rages horribly, and rules tyrannically ; it is a very fever in the reason, and a calenture in the passions ; and therefore either it must be quenched, or it will be impossible to cure our evil natures : the curing of this is not the remedy of a single evil, but it is a doing violence to our whole nature ; and therefore hath in it the greatest courage and an equal conduct, and supposes spiritual strengths great enough to contest against every enemy.

THE THREE STATES OF MAN,—NATURE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

CHRIST'S kingdom,—being in order to the kingdom of his Father, which shall be manifest at the day of judgment,—must therefore be spiritual ; because then it is, that all things must become spiritual, not only by way of eminency, but by entire constitution and perfect change of natures. Men shall be like angels, and angels shall be comprehended in the lap of spiritual and eternal felicities ; the soul shall not understand by material phantasms, neither be served by the provisions of the body, but the body itself shall become spiritual, and the eye shall see intellectual objects, and the mouth shall feed upon hymns and glorifications of God ; the belly shall be then made satisfied by the fulness of righteousness, and the tongue shall speak nothing but praises, and the propositions of a celestial wisdom ; the motion shall be the swiftness of an angel, and it shall be clothed with white as with a garment : holiness is the sun, and righteousness is the moon in that region ; our society shall be choirs of singers, and our conversation wonder ; contemplation shall be our food, and love shall be ‘the wine of elect souls.’ And, as to every natural appetite there is now proportioned an object, gross, material, unsatisfying, and allayed with sorrow and uneasiness, so there be new capacities and equal objects ; the desires shall be

fruition, and the appetite shall not suppose want, but a faculty of delight, and an immeasurable complacency : the will and the understanding, love and wonder, joys every day and the same for ever : this shall be their state who shall be accounted worthy of the resurrection to this life ; where the body shall be a partner, but no servant ; where it shall have no work of its own, but it shall rejoice with the soul ; where the soul shall rule without resistance or an enemy ; and we shall be fitted to enjoy God, who is the Lord and Father of spirits. In this world, we see it is quite contrary : we long for perishing meat, and fill our stomachs with corruption ; we look after white and red, and the weaker beauties of the night ; we are passionate after rings and seals, and enraged at the breaking of a crystal ; we delight in the society of fools and weak persons ; we laugh at sin and contrive mischiefs ; and the body rebels against the soul, and carries the cause against all its just pretences ; and our soul itself is, above half of it, earth and stone, in its affections and distempers ; our hearts are hard and inflexible to the softer whispers of mercy and compassion, having no loves for any thing but strange flesh, and heaps of money, and popular noises, for misery and folly ; and therefore we are a huge way off from the kingdom of God, whose excellencies, whose designs, whose ends, whose constitution, is spiritual and holy, and separate, and sublime, and perfect. Now between these two states of natural flesh, and heavenly spirit, that is, the powers of darkness, and the regions of light, the miseries of man, and the perfections of God ; the imperfection of nature where we stand by our creation, and supervening follies, and that state of felicities, whither we are designed by the mercies of God,—there is a middle state, “the kingdom of grace,” wrought for us by our Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, who came to perfect the virtue of religion, and the designs of God, and to reform our nature, and to make it possible for us to come to that spiritual state, where all felicity does dwell. The religion that Christ taught, is a spiritual religion ; it designs (so far as this state can permit) to make us spiritual ; that is, so as the Spirit be the prevailing ingredient. God must now be worshipped in spirit, and not only so, but with a fervent spirit ; for the nature of a spiritual religion is, that in it we serve God with our hearts and affections ; and because, while the spirit prevails, we do not to evil purposes of abatement converse with flesh and blood, this service is also fervent, intense, active, wise, and busy, according to the nature of things spiritual. Christ by his laws did make provision that God should be served entirely, according as God always designed, and accordingly required by his prophets, that his work be done sincerely, and our duty with great affection ; and by these two provisions, both the intention and the extension are secured ; our duty shall be entire, and it shall be perfect, we shall be neither lame nor cold, without a limb, nor without natural heat, and then “the work of the Lord will prosper in our hands :” but if we fail in either, we do “the Lord’s work deceitfully,” and then we are accursed. For so saith the Spirit of God, “Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.”

“MY SON, GIVE ME THINE HEART.”

HE that serves God with the body without the soul, serves God deceitfully. “My son, give me thine heart;” and though I cannot think that nature was so sacramental, as to point out the holy and mysterious Trinity by the triangle of the heart, yet it is certain that the heart of man is God’s special portion, and every angle ought to point out towards him directly; that is, the soul of man ought to be presented to God, and given him as an oblation to the interest of his service.

1. For, to worship God with our souls confesses one of his glorious attributes; it declares him to be the searcher of hearts, and that he reads the secret purposes, and beholds the smallest arrests of fancy, and bends in all the flexures and intrigues of crafty people; and searches out every plot and trifling conspiracy against him, and against ourselves and against our brethren.

2. It advances the powers and concernments of his providence, and confesses all the affairs of men, all their cabinets and their nightly counsels, their snares and two-edged mischiefs to be overruled by him: for what he sees he judges, and what he judges he rules, and what he rules must turn to his glory; and of this glory he reflects rays and influences upon his servants, and it shall also turn to their good.

3. This service distinguishes our duty towards God from all our conversation with man, and separates the Divine commandments from the imperfect decrees of princes and republics; for these are satisfied by the outward work, and cannot take any other cognizance of the heart, and the will of man, but as himself is pleased to signify. He that wishes the ‘fiscus’ empty, and that all the revenues of the crown were in his counting-house, cannot be punished by the laws, unless himself become his own traitor and accuser; and therefore what man cannot discern, he must not judge, and must not require. But God sees it, and judges it, and requires it, and therefore reserves this as his own portion, and the chiefest feudal right of his crown.

4. He that secures the heart, secures all the rest; because this is the principle of all the moral actions of the whole man, and the hand obeys this, and the feet walk by its prescriptions; we eat and drink by measures which the soul desires and limits; and though the natural actions of men are not subject to choice and rule, yet the animal actions are under discipline; and although it cannot be helped that we shall desire, yet our desires can receive measures, and the laws of circumstances, and be reduced to order, and nature be changed into grace, and the actions animal, (such as are, eating, drinking, laughing, weeping, &c.) shall become actions of religion; and those that are simply natural (such as, being hungry and thirsty) shall be adopted into the retinue of religion, and become religious by being ordered or chastised, or suffered, or directed; and therefore God requires the heart, because he requires all; and all cannot be secured, without the principle be enclosed. But he that seals up a fountain, may drink up all the waters alone, and may best appoint the channel where it shall run, and what grounds it shall refresh.

5. That I may sum up many reasons in one; God by requiring the heart secures the perpetuity and perseverance of our duty, and its sincerity,

and its integrity, and its perfection : for so also God takes account of little things ; it being all one in the heart of man, whether maliciously it omits a duty in a small instance or in a great ; for although the expression hath variety and degrees in it, in relation to those purposes of usefulness and charity whither God designs it, yet the obedience and disobedience are all one, and shall be equally accounted for ; and therefore the Jew Tryphon disputed against Justin, that the precepts of the Gospel were impossible to be kept, because it also requiring the heart of man, did stop every egression of disorders : for making the root holy and healthful, as the balsam of Judea, or the drops of manna in the evening of the sabbath ; it also causes that nothing spring thence but gums fit for incense, and oblations for the altar of propitiation, and a cloud of perfume fit to make atonement for our sins ; and being united to the great sacrifice of the world, to reconcile God and man together. Upon these reasons you see it is highly fit that God should require it, and that we should pay the sacrifice of our hearts ; and not at all think that God is satisfied with the work of the hands, when the affections of the heart were absent. He that prays because he would be quiet, and would fain be quit of it, and communicates for fear of the laws, and comes to church to avoid shame, and gives alms to be eased of an importunate beggar, or relieves his old parents because they will not die in their time, and provides for his children lest he be compelled by laws and shame, but yet complains of the charge of God's blessings ; this man is a servant of the eyes of men, and offers parchment or a white skin in sacrifice, but the flesh and the inwards he leaves to be consumed by a stranger fire. And therefore, this is a deceit that robs God of the best, and leaves that for religion which men pare off : it is sacrilege, and brings a double curse.

DESCRIPTION OF SOME WHO BEGIN TO RUN WELL AND THEN ARE HINDERED.

So have I seen a fair structure begun with art and care, and raised to half its stature, and then it stood still by the misfortune or negligence of the owner, and the rain descended, and dwelt in its joints, and supplanted the contexture of his pillars, and having stood awhile, like the antiquated temple of a deceased oracle, it fell into a hasty age, and sunk upon its own knees, and so descended into ruin : so is the imperfect, unfinished spirit of a man ; it lays the foundation of a holy resolution, and strengthens it with vows and arts of prosecution, it raises up the walls, sacraments, and prayers, reading, and holy ordinances ; and holy actions begin with a slow motion, and the building stays, and the spirit is weary, and the soul is naked, and exposed to temptation, and in the days of storm take in every thing that can do it mischief ; and it is faint and sick, listless and tired, and it stands till its own weight wearies the foundation, and then declines to death and sad disorder, being so much the worse, because it hath not only returned to its first follies, but hath superadded unthankfulness and carelessness, a positive neglect and a despite of holy things, a setting a low price to the things of God, laziness and wretchlessness : all which are evils superadded

to the first state of coldness, whither the man is with all these loads and circumstances of death easily revolved.*

FERVOUR IN PRAYER NECESSARY.

OUR prayers and devotions must be fervent and zealous, not cold, patient, easy, and soon rejected ; but supported by a patient spirit, set forwards by importunity, continued by perseverance, waited on by attention and a present mind, carried along with holy, but strong desires ; and balasted with resignation, and conformity to the Divine will ; and then it is, as God likes it, and does the work to God's glory and our interest effectively. He that asks with a doubting mind, and a lazy desire, begs for nothing but to be denied ; we must in our prayers be earnest and fervent, or else we shall have but a cold answer ; for God gives his grace according as we can receive it ; and whatsoever evil returns we meet in our prayers, when we ask for good things, is wholly by reason of our wandering spirits and cold desires ; we have reason to complain that our minds wander in our prayers, and our diversions are more prevailing than all our arts of application, and detention ; and we wander sometimes even when we pray against wandering : and it is in some degrees natural and inevitable : but although the evil is not wholly to be cured, yet the symptoms are to be eased ; and if our desires were strong, and fervent, our minds would in the same proportion be present : we see it by a certain and regular experience ; what we love passionately, we perpetually think on, and it returns upon us whether we will or no ; and in a great fear, the apprehension cannot be shaken off ; and therefore, if our desires of holy things were strong and earnest, we should most certainly attend our prayers : it is a more violent affection to other things, that carries us off from this ; and therefore, if we loved passionately what we ask for daily, we should ask with hearty desires, and an earnest appetite, and a present spirit ; and however it be very easy to have our thoughts wander, yet it is our indifferency and lukewarmness that make it so natural ; and you may observe it, that so long as the light shines bright, and the fires of devotion, and desires flame out, so long the mind of a man stands close to the altar, and waits upon the sacrifice ; but as the fires die, and desires decay, so the mind steals away, and walks abroad to see the little images of beauty and pleasure, which it beholds in the falling stars and little glow-worms of the world. The river that runs slow and creeps by the banks, and begs leave of every turf to let it pass, is drawn into little hollownesses, and spends itself in smaller portions, and dies with diversion ; but when it runs with vigorousness and a full stream, and breaks down every obstacle, making it even as its own brow, it stays not to be tempted by little avocations, and to creep into holes, but runs into the sea through full and useful channels : so is a man's prayer ; if it moves upon the feet of an abated appetite, it wanders into the society of every trifling accident, and stays at the corners of the fancy, and talks with every object it meets, and cannot arrive at heaven ; but when it is carried upon the wings of passion and strong de-

sires, a swift motion and a hungry appetite, it passes on through all the intermedial regions of clouds, and stays not till it dwells at the foot of the throne, where mercy sits, and thence sends holy showers of refreshment. I deny not but some little drops will turn aside, and fall from the full channel by the weakness of the banks, and hollowness of the passage ; but the main course is still continued : and although the most earnest and devout persons feel and complain of some looseness of spirit, and unfixed attentions, yet their love and their desire secure the main portions, and make the prayer to be strong, fervent, and effectual. “ A wise man, and a full resolution, and an earnest spirit, can do any thing of duty ;” but every temptation prevails, when we are willing to die ; and we usually lend nothing to devotion but the offices that flatter our passions ; we can desire and pray for any thing, that may serve our lust, or promote those ends which we covet, but ought to fear and flee from : but the same earnestness, if it were transplanted into religion and our prayers, would serve all the needs of the spirit, but for want of it we do “ the Lord’s work deceitfully.”

PERSEVERING ZEAL.

To that fervour and zeal that is necessary and a duty, it is required that we be constant and persevering. “ Be thou faithful unto death,” said the Spirit of God to the angel of the church of Smyrna ; “ Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” For he that is warm to-day and cold to-morrow, zealous in his resolution and weary in his practices, fierce in the beginning and slack and easy in his progress, hath not yet well chosen what side he will be of ; he sees not reason enough for religion, and he hath not confidence enough for its contrary ; and therefore he is “ duplicis animi,” as St James calls him ; “ of a doubtful mind.” For religion is worth as much to-day as it was yesterday, and that cannot change though we do ; and if we do, we have left God, and whither he can go that goes from God, his own sorrows will soon enough instruct him. This fire must never go out, but it must be like the fire of heaven, it must shine like the stars, though sometimes covered with a cloud, or obscured by a greater light ; yet they dwell for ever in their orbs, and walk in their circles, and observe their circumstances, but go not out by day nor night, and set not when kings die, nor are extinguished when nations change their government : so must the zeal of a Christian be, a constant incentive of his duty ; and though sometimes his hand is drawn back by violence or need, and his prayers shortened by the importunity of business, and some parts omitted by necessities, and just compliances, yet still the fire is kept alive ; it burns within when the light breaks not forth, and is eternal as the orb of fire, or the embers of the altar of incense.

DELIGHT IN GOD'S SERVICE.

No man is zealous as he ought, but he that delights in the service of God :—without this no man can persevere, but must faint under the continual pressure of uneasy loads. If a man goes to his prayers as children go to school, or give alms as those that pay contribution, and meditate with the same willingness with which young men die, this man does but act a part which he cannot long personate, but will find so many excuses and silly devices to omit his duty, such tricks to run from that which will make him happy ; he will so watch the eyes of men, and be so sure to do nothing in private ; he will so often distinguish and mince the duty into minutes and little particles ; he will so tie himself to the letter of the law, and be so careless of the intention and spiritual design ; he will be so punctual in the ceremony and trifling in the secret ; and he will be so well pleased when he is hindered by an accident not of his own procuring, and will have so many devices to defeat his duty, and to cozen himself, that he will certainly manifest that he is afraid of religion, and secretly hates it ; he counts it a burden, and an objection, and then the man is sure to leave it, when his circumstances are so fitted. But if we delight in it, we enter into a portion of the reward, as soon as we begin the work, and the very grace shall be stronger than the temptation in its very pretence of pleasure ; and therefore it must needs be pleasing to God, because it confesses God to be the best master, religion the best work ; and it serves God with choice and will, and reconciles our nature to it, and entertains our appetite ; and then there is no handle left, whereby we can easily be drawn from duty, when all parties are pleased with the employment. But this delight is not to be understood as if it were always required, that we should feel an actual cheerfulness, and sensible joy ; such as was that of Jonathan, when he had newly tasted honey, and the light came into his eyes, and he was refreshed and pleasant. This happens sometimes, when God pleases to entice, or reward a man's spirit, with little antepasts of heaven ; but such a delight only is necessary, and a duty, that we always choose our duty regularly, and undervalue the pleasures of temptation, and proceed in the work of grace with a firm choice and unabated election ; our joy must be a joy of hope, a joy at least of confident sufferers, the joys of faith and expectation ; “ rejoicing in hope,” so the Apostle calls it ; that is, a going forward upon such a persuasion as sees the joys of God laid up for the children of men : and so the sun may shine under a cloud ; and a man may rejoice in persecution, and delight in losses ; that is, though his outward man groans, and faints, and dies, yet his spirit, ‘ the inner man,’ is confident and industrious, and hath a hope by which it lives and works unto the end : it was the case of our blessed Saviour in his agony ; his “ soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death,” and the load of his Father's anger crushed his shoulder, and bowed his knees to the ground ; and yet he chose it, and still went forward, and resolved to die, and did so ; and what we choose we delight in ; and we think it to be eligible, and therefore amiable, and fit by its proper excellences and appendages to be delighted in ; it is not pleasant to the flesh at all times, for its dignity is spiritual and heavenly ; but therefore it is proportioned to the spirit, which is as heavenly as the reward, and therefore can feel the joys of it, when the body hangs the head, and is uneasy and troubled.

FREQUENCY IN PRAYER NECESSARY.

CONCERNING frequency in prayer, it is an act of zeal so ready and prepared for the spirit of a man, so easy and useful, so without objection, and so fitted for every man's affairs, his necessities and possibilities, that he that prays but seldom, cannot in any sense pretend to be a religious person. For in Scripture there is no other rule for the frequency of prayer given us, but by such words which signify we should do it "always," "pray continually:" and, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." And then, men have so many necessities, that if we should esteem our needs to be the circumstances and positive determination of our times of prayer, we should be very far from admitting limitation of the former words, but they must mean, that we ought to pray frequently every day. For in danger and trouble, natural religion teaches us to pray; in a festival fortune, our prudence and our needs enforce us equally. For though we feel not a present smart, yet we are certain then is our biggest danger: and if we observe how the world treats her darlings, men of riches and honour, of prosperity and great success, we cannot but confess them to be the most miserable of all men, as being in the greatest danger of losing their biggest interest. For they are bigger than the iron hand of law, and they cannot be restrained with fear: the hand grasps a power of doing all that, which their evil heart can desire, and they cannot be restrained with disability to sin; they are flattered by all mean, and base, and undiligent persons, which are the greatest part of mankind; but few men dare reprove a potent sinner; he shall every day be flattered and seldom counselled: and his great reflections and opinions of his condition make him impatient of reproof, and so he cannot be restrained with modesty: and therefore as the needs of the poor man, his rent-day, and the cries of his children, and the oppression he groans under, and his uneasy, "ill-sleeping care,"—will make him run to his prayers, that in heaven a new decree may be passed every day for the provisions of his daily bread: so the greater needs of the rich, their temptations, and their dangers, the flattery and the vanity, the power and the pride, their business and evil estate of the whole world upon them, call upon them to be zealous in this instance, that they "pray often," that they "pray without ceasing;" for there is great reason they should do so, and great security and advantage, if they do; for he that prays well and prays often, must needs be a good and a blessed man; and truly he that does not, deserves no pity for his misery. For when all the troubles and dangers of his condition may turn into his good, if he will but desire they should; when upon such easy terms he may be happy, for there is no more trouble in it than this, "Ask and ye shall receive;" that is all that is required: no more turnings and variety in their road; when, I say, at so cheap a rate, a poor man may be provided for, and a rich man may escape damnation, he that refuses to apply himself to this remedy, quickly, earnestly, zealously, and constantly, deserves the smart of his poverty, and the care of it, and the scorn, if he be poor; and if he be rich, it is fit he should (because he desires it) die by the evils of his proper danger. It was observed by Cassian, "The devil is more busy to disturb our prayers, than to hinder any thing else." For else it cannot be imagined, why we should be brought to pray so seldom; and to be so listless to them, and so

trifling at them. No, the devil knows, upon what hard terms he stands with the praying man ; he also knows, that it is a mighty emanation of God's infinite goodness and a strange desire of saving mankind, that he hath to so easy a duty promised such mighty blessings. This, because the devil knows it to be one of the greatest arts of the Divine mercy, he labours infinitely to supplant ; and if he can but make men unwilling to pray, or to pray coldly, or to pray seldom, he secures his interest, and destroys the man's ; and it is infinitely strange, that he can and doth prevail so much in this so unreasonable temptation. The mourning prophet complained,* " there was a cloud passed between heaven and the prayer of Judah ;" a little thing, God knows ; it was a wall, which might have been blown down with a few hearty sighs, and a few penitential tears ; or, if the prayers had ascended in a full and numerous body, themselves would have broken through that little partition ; but so the devil prevails often ; " opponit nubem," " he claps a cloud between:" some little objection ; " a stranger is come ;" or, " my head aches ;" or, " the church is too cold ;" or, " I have letters to write ;" or, " I am not disposed ;" or, " it is not yet time ;" or, " the time is past : " these, and such as these, are the clouds the devil claps between heaven and us ; but these are such impotent objections, that they were as soon confuted as pretended, by all men that are not fools, or professed enemies of religion, but that they are clouds, which sometimes look like lions and bears, castles and walls of fire, armies and horses ; and indeed are any thing that a man will fancy ; and the smallest article of objection, managed and conducted by the devil's arts, and meeting with a retchless, careless, undevout spirit, is a lion in the way, and a deep river ; it is impassable, and it is impregnable. The devil fits us with clouds, according as we can be abused ; and if we love affairs of the world, he can contrive its circumstances so, that they shall cross our prayers ; and so it is in every instance : and the best way to cure this evil is prayer ; pray often, and pray zealously, and the Sun of Righteousness will scatter these clouds, and warm our hearts with his holy fires : but it is in this as in all acquired habits ; the habit makes the action easy and pleasant ; but this habit cannot be gotten without frequent actions : habits are the daughters of action ; but then they nurse their mother, and produce daughters after her image, but far more beautiful and prosperous. For in frequent prayer there is so much rest and pleasure, that as soon as ever it is perceived, the contrary temptation appears unreasonable ; none are so unwilling to pray, as they that pray seldom ; for they that do pray often, and with zeal, and passion, and desire, feel no trouble so great, as when they are forced to omit their holy offices and hours of prayers. It concerns the devil's interest to keep us from all the experience of the rewards of a frequent and holy prayer ; and so long as you will not try and " taste how good and gracious the Lord is" to the praying man, so long you cannot see the evil of your coldness and lukewarm state ; but if you would but try, though it be but for curiosity's sake, and inform yourselves in the vanity of things, and the truth of pretences, and the certainty of theological propositions, you should find yourselves taken in a golden snare, which will tie you to nothing but felicity, and safety, and holiness, and pleasure. But then the caution, which I intended to insert, is this ; that fre-

* Lam. iii. 44.

quency in prayers, and that part of zeal which relates to it, is to be upon no account but of a holy spirit, a wise heart, and reasonable persuasion; for if it begin upon passion or fear, in imitation of others, or desires of reputation, honour, and fantastic principles, it will be unblessed and weary, unprosperous and without return of satisfaction; therefore, if it happen to begin upon a weak principle, be very curious to change the motive, and with all speed let it be turned into religion and the love of holy things: then, let it be as frequent as it can prudently, it cannot be amiss.

ZEAL TO BE UNITED WITH CHARITY.

THE first measure, by which our zeal may comply with our duty, and its actions become laudable, is charity to our neighbour. For since God receives all that glorification of himself, whereby we can serve and minister to his glory, reflected upon the foundation of his own goodness, and bounty, and mercy, and all the hallelujahs that are or ever shall be sung in heaven, are praises and thanksgivings; and that God himself does not receive glory from the acts of his justice, but then when his creatures will not rejoice in his goodness and mercy; it follows that we imitate this original excellency, and pursue God's own method; that is, glorify him in the way of mercy and bounty, charity and forgiveness, love and fair compliances: there is no greater charity in the world than to save a soul, nothing that pleases God better, nothing that can be in our hands greater or more noble, nothing that can be a more lasting and delightful honour, than that a perishing soul,—snatched from the flames of an intolerable hell, and borne to heaven upon the wings of piety and mercy by the ministry of angels, and the graces of the Holy Spirit,—shall to eternal ages bless God and bless thee; Him, for the author and finisher of salvation, and thee for the minister and charitable instrument: that bright star must needs look pleasantly upon thy face for ever, which was by thy hand placed there, and, had it not been for thy ministry, might have been a sooty coal in the regions of sorrow. Now, in order to this, God hath given us all some powers and ministries, by which we may by our charity promote this religion, and the great interest of souls; counsels and prayers, preaching and writing, passionate desires and fair examples going before others in the way of godliness, and bearing the torch before them, that they may see the way and walk in it. This is a charity, that is prepared more or less for every one; and, by the way, we should do well to consider, what we have done towards it. For as it will be a strange arrest at the day of judgment to Dives, that he fed high and suffered Lazarus to starve, and every garment, that lies by thee and perishes, while thy naked brother does so too for want of it, shall be a bill of indictment against thy unmerciful soul; so it will be in every instance: in what thou couldest profit thy brother and didst not, thou art accountable; and then tell over the times, in which thou hast prayed for the conversion of thy sinning brother; and compare the times together, and observe, whether thou hast not tempted him or betrayed him to sin, or encouraged him in it; or didst not hinder him, when

thou mightest, more frequently than thou hast, humbly, and passionately, and charitably, and zealously, have bowed thy head, and thy heart, and knees, to God, to redeem that poor soul from hell, whither thou seest him descending with as much indifferency as a stone into the bottom of the well. In this thing "it is a good thing to be zealous," and put forth all your strength, for you can never go too far. But then be careful, that this zeal of thy neighbour's amendment be only expressed in ways of charity, not of cruelty, or importune justice. "He that strikes the prince for justice," as Solomon's expression is, "is a companion of murderers;" and he that, out of zeal of religion, shall go to convert nations to his opinion by destroying Christians, whose faith is entire and summed up by the apostles, this man breaks the ground with a sword, and sows tares, and waters the ground with blood, and ministers to envy and cruelty, to errors and mistake, and there comes up nothing but poppies to please the eye and fancy, disputes and hypocrisy, new summaries of religion estimated by measures of anger, and accursed principles; and so much of the religion as is necessary to salvation, is laid aside, and that brought forth that serves an interest, not holiness; that fills the schools of a proud man, but not that which will fill heaven. Any zeal is proper for religion, but the zeal of the sword and the zeal of anger; this is "the bitterness of zeal;"* and it is a certain temptation to every man against his duty: for if the sword turns preacher, and dictates propositions by empire instead of arguments, and engraves them in men's hearts with a poniard, that it shall be death to believe what I innocently and ignorantly am persuaded of, it must needs be unsafe to "try the spirits, to try all things," to make inquiry; and yet without this liberty, no man can justify himself before God and man, nor confidently say that his religion is best: since he cannot without a final danger make himself able to give a right sentence, and to follow that which he finds to be the best; this may ruin souls by making hypocrites, or careless and compliant against conscience or without it; but it does not save souls, though peradventure it should force them to a good opinion; this is inordination of zeal; for Christ, by reproofing St Peter, drawing his sword, even in the cause of Christ, for his sacred, and yet injured person, (saith Theophylact), "teaches us not to use the sword though in the cause of God, or for God himself;" because he will secure his own interest, only let him be served as himself is pleased to command: and it is like Moses's passion, it throws the tables of the law out of our hands, and breaks them in pieces out of indignation to see them broken. We shall find in Scripture, that when the apostles began to preach the meekness of the Christian institution, salvations and promises, charity and humility, there was a zeal set up against them; the apostles were zealous for the gospel, the Jews were zealous for the law: and see what different effects these two zeals did produce; the zeal of the law came to this, "they stirred up the city, they made tumults, they persecuted this way unto the death, they got letters from the high-priest, they kept Damascus with a garrison," they sent parties of soldiers to silence and to imprison the preachers, and thought they did God service, when they put the apostles to death, and they swore "neither to eat nor to drink, till they had killed Paul." It was an old trick of the Jewish zeal. They would not show the way to a Samaritan,

* James iii. 14.

nor give a cup of cold water but to a circumcised brother ; that was their zeal. But the zeal of the apostles was this, they preached publicly and privately, they prayed for all men, they wept to God for the hardness of men's hearts, they " became all things to all men, that they might gain some," they travelled through deeps and deserts, they endured the heat of the Sirian star, and the violence of Euroclydon, winds and tempests, seas and prisons, mockings and scourgings, fastings and poverty, labour and watching, they endured every man and wronged no man, they would do any good thing and suffer any evil, if they had but hopes to prevail upon a soul ; they persuaded men meekly, they entreated them humbly, they convinced them powerfully, they watched for their good, but meddled not with their interest ; and this is the Christian zeal, the zeal of meekness, the zeal of charity, the zeal of patience. " In these it is good to be zealous."

THE EPICURE'S PROVERB.

" LET us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." This is the epicure's proverb, begun upon a weak mistake, started by chance from the discourses of drink, and thought witty by the undiscerning company, and prevailed infinitely, because it struck their fancy luckily, and maintained the merry meeting ; but as it happens commonly to such discourses, so this also, when it comes to be examined by the consultations of the morning, and the sober hours of the day, it seems the most witless, and the most unreasonable in the world. Sentenced persons have but little stomach to feast high. And there is also the same proportion of unreasonableness, that because men shall " die to-morrow," and by the sentence and unalterable decree of God they are now descending to their graves, that therefore they should first destroy their reason, and then force dull time to run faster, that they may die sottish as beasts, and speedily as a fly : but they thought there was no life after this ; or if there were, it was without pleasure, and every soul thrust into a hole, and a dorter of a span's length allowed for his rest, and for his walk ; and in the shades below no numbering of healths, no fat mullets, no oysters of Lucrinus, no Lesbian or Chian wines. Therefore now enjoy the delicacies of nature, and feel the descending wines distilled through the limbeck of thy tongue, and larynx, and suck the delicious juices of fishes, the marrow of the laborious ox, and the tender lard of Apulian swine, and the condited bellies of the scarus ; but lose no time, for the sun drives hard, and the shadow is long, and " the days of mourning are at hand," but the number of the days of darkness and the grave cannot be told.

Thus they thought they discoursed wisely, and their wisdom was turned into folly ; for all their arts of providence, and witty securities of pleasure, were nothing but unmanly prologues to death, fear, and folly, sensuality and beastly pleasures. But they are to be excused rather than we. They placed themselves in the order of beasts and birds, and esteemed their bodies nothing but receptacles of flesh and wine, larders and pantries ; and their soul the fine instrument of pleasure and brisk perception of relishes

and gusts, reflections and duplications of delight ; and therefore they treated themselves accordingly. But then, why we should do the same things, who are led by other principles, and a more severe institution, and better notices of immortality, who understand what shall happen to a soul hereafter, and know that this time is but a passage to eternity, this body but a servant to the soul, this soul a minister to the Spirit, and the whole man in order to God and to felicity ; this, I say, is more unreasonable than to eat poison-berries to preserve our health, and to enter into the flood that we may die a dry death ; this is perfect contradiction to the state of good things, whither we are designed, and to all the principles of a wise philosophy, whereby we are instructed that we may become “ wise unto salvation.”

THE MADNESS OF INTEMPERANCE.

AND now, after all this, I pray consider, what a strange madness and prodigious folly possess many men, that they love to swallow death, and diseases, and dishonour, with an appetite which no reason can restrain. We expect our servants should not dare to touch what we have forbidden to them ; we are watchful that our children should not swallow poisons, and filthiness, and unwholesome nourishment ; we take care that they should be well-mannered, and civil, and of fair demeanour ; and we ourselves desire to be, or at least to be accounted, wise, and would infinitely scorn to be called fools ; and we are so great lovers of health, that we will buy it at any rate of money or observance ; and then for honour, it is that which the children of men pursue with passion, it is one of the noblest rewards of virtue, and the proper ornament of the wise and valiant, and yet all these things are not valued or considered, when a merry meeting, or a looser feast, calls upon the man to act a scene of folly and madness, and healthlessness and dishonour. We do to God what we severely punish in our servants ; we correct our children for their meddling with dangers, which ourselves prefer before immortality ; and though no man think himself fit to be despised, yet he is willing to make himself a beast, a sot, and a ridiculous monkey, with the follies and vapours of wine ; and when he is high in drink or fancy, proud as a Grecian orator in the midst of his popular noises, at the same time he shall talk such dirty language, such mean low things, as may well become a changeling and a fool, for whom the stocks are prepared by the laws, and the just scorn of men. Every drunkard clothes his head with a mighty scorn ; and makes himself lower at that time than the meanest of his servants ; the boys can laugh at him when he is led like a cripple, directed like a blind man, and speaks like an infant imperfect noises, lisping with a full and spongy tongue, and an empty head, and a vain and foolish heart : so cheaply does he part with his honour for drink or loads of meat ; for which honour he is ready to die, rather than hear it to be disparaged by another ; when himself destroys it, as bubbles perish with the breath of children. Do not the laws of all wise nations mark the drunkard for a fool, with the meanest and most scornful punish-

ment? and is there any thing in the world so foolish as a man that is drunk? But, good God! what an intolerable sorrow hath seized upon great portions of mankind, that this folly and madness should possess the greatest spirits, and the wittiest men, the best company, the most sensible of the word honour, and the most jealous of losing the shadow, and the most careless of the thing? Is it not a horrid thing, that a wise or a crafty, a learned or a noble person, should dishonour himself as a fool, destroy his body as a murderer, lessen his estate as a prodigal, disgrace every good cause that he can pretend to by his relation, and become an appellative of scorn, a scene of laughter or derision, and all, for the reward of forgetfulness and madness? for there are in immoderate drinking no other pleasures.

CELIBACY AND MARRIAGE COMPARED.

ALTHOUGH single life hath in it such privacy and simplicity of affairs, such solitariness and sorrow, such leisure and inactive circumstances of living, that there are more spaces for religion, if men would use them to these purposes; and because it may have in it much religion and prayers, and must have in it a perfect mortification of our strongest appetites, it is therefore a state of great excellency; yet, concerning the state of marriage, we are taught from Scripture and the sayings of wise men, great things are honourable. The first miracle that ever Jesus did, was to do honour to a wedding; marriage was in the world before sin, and is in all ages of the world the greatest and most effective antidote against sin, in which all the world had perished, if God had not made a remedy: and although sin hath soured marriage, and struck the man's head with cares, and the woman's bed with sorrows in the production of children; yet these are but throes of life and glory, and "she shall be saved in child-bearing, if she be found in faith" and righteousness. Marriage is a school and exercise of virtue; and though marriage hath cares, yet the single life hath desires, which are more troublesome and more dangerous, and often end in sin, while the cares are but instances of duty and exercises of piety: and therefore, if single life hath more privacy of devotion, yet marriage hath more necessities and more variety of it, and is an exercise of more graces. In two virtues, celibate or single life may have the advantage of degrees ordinarily and commonly,—that is, in chastity and devotion: but as in some persons this may fail, and it does in very many, and a married man may spend as much time in devotion as any virgins or widows do; yet as in marriage even those virtues of chastity and devotion are exercised, so in other instances, his state hath proper exercises and trials for those graces, for which single life can never be crowned; here is the proper scene of piety and patience, of the duty of parents and the charity of relatives; here kindness is spread abroad, and love is united and made firm as a centre: marriage is the nursery of heaven; the virgin sends prayer to God, but she carries but one soul to him; but the state of marriage fills up the numbers of the elect, and hath in it the labour of love, and the delicacies of friendship, the blessing of society, and the union of hands and hearts; it hath in it less of beauty, but

more of safety, than the single life ; it hath more care but less danger ; it is more merry, and more sad ; is fuller of sorrows, and fuller of joys ; it lies under more burdens, but is supported by all the strengths of love and charity, and those burdens are delightful. Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities, and churches, and heaven itself. Celibate, like the fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined and dies in singularity ; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house and gathers sweetness from every flower, and labours and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world with delicacies, and obeys their king, and keeps order, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God hath designed the present constitution of the world.

Single life makes men in one instance to be like angels, but marriage in very many things makes the chaste pair to be like to Christ. "This is a great mystery," but it is the symbolical and sacramental representation of the greatest mysteries of our religion. Christ descended from his Father's bosom, and contracted his divinity with flesh and blood, and married our nature, and we became a church, the spouse of the Bridegroom, which he cleansed with his blood, and gave her his Holy Spirit for a dowry, and heaven for a jointure ; begetting children unto God by the Gospel. This spouse he hath joined to himself by an excellent charity, he feeds her at his own table, and lodges her nigh his own heart, provides for all her necessities, relieves her sorrows, determines her doubts, guides her wanderings, he is become her head, and she as a signet upon his right hand ; he first indeed was betrothed to the synagogue and had many children by her, but she forsook her love, and then he married the church of the Gentiles, and by her as by a second venter had a more numerous issue, and "all the children dwell in the same house," and are heirs of the same promises, entitled to the same inheritance. Here is the eternal conjunction, the indissoluble knot, the exceeding love of Christ, the obedience of the spouse, the communicating of goods, the uniting of interests, the fruit of marriage, a celestial generation, a new creature : "This is the sacramental mystery," represented by the holy rite of marriage ; so that marriage is divine in its institution, sacred in its union, holy in the mystery, sacramental in its signification, honourable in its appellation, religious in its employments : it is advantage to the societies of men, and it is 'holiness to the Lord.'

COMMON DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

1. "MARRY in the Lord," that begins all, and there is great need it should be so : for they that enter into a state of marriage, cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband ; she must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her own folly or infelicity hath produced ;

and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God as subjects do of tyrant princes, but otherwise she hath no appeal in the cause of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again, and when he sits among his neighbours, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply.—The stags in the Greek epigram, whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains, came down to the brooks of the valleys, “hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream;”^{*} but there the frost overtook them, and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen took them in their stranger snare. It is the unhappy chance of many men, finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh their troubles, and there they enter into fetters, and are bound to sorrow by the cords of a man’s or woman’s peevishness: and the worst of the evil is, they are to thank their own follies; for they fell into the snare by entering an improper way: Christ and the church were no ingredients in their choice. Begin therefore with God; Christ is the president of marriage, and the Holy Ghost is the fountain of purities and chaste loves, and he joins the hearts; and therefore, let our first suit be in the court of heaven, and with designs of piety, or safety, or charity; let no impure spirit defile the virgin purities and ‘castifications of the soul,’ (as St Peter’s phrase is); let all such contracts begin with religious affections.

2. Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation: every little thing can blast an infant blossom; and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when first they begin to curl like the locks of a new-weaned boy; but when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have, by the warm embraces of the sun and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken: so are the early unions of an unfixed marriage; watchful and observant, jealous and busy, inquisitive and careful, and apt to take alarm at every unkind word. For infirmities do not manifest themselves in the first scenes, but in the succession of a long society; and it is not chance or weakness when it appears at first, but it is want of love or prudence, or it will be so expounded; and that which appears ill at first, usually affrights the inexperienced man or woman, who makes unequal conjectures, and fancies mighty sorrows by the proportions of the new and early unkindness. It is a very great passion, or a huge folly, or a certain want of love, that cannot preserve the colours and beauties of kindness, so long as public honesty requires a man to wear their sorrows for the death of a friend. Plutarch compares a new marriage to a vessel before the hoops are on; “every thing dissolves their tender compaginations; but when the joints are stiffened and are tied by a firm compliance and proportioned bending, scarcely can it be dissolved without fire or the violence of iron.” After the hearts of the man and the wife are endeared and hardened by a mutual confidence, and experience longer than artifice and pretence can last, there are a great many remembrances, and some things present, that dash all little unkindnesses in pieces.

^{*} Brun. An. 2. 135.

The little boy in the Greek epigram, that was creeping down a precipice, was invited to his safety by the sight of his mother's pap, when nothing else could entice him to return: and the bond of common children, and the sight of her that nurses what is most dear to him, and the endearments of each other in the course of a long society, and the same relation, is an excellent security to reintegrate and to call that love back, which folly and trifling accidents would disturb. When it is come thus far, it is hard untwisting the knot; but be careful in its first coalition, that there be no rudeness done; for, if there be, it will for ever after be apt to start and to be diseased.

3. Let man and wife be careful to stifle little things, that, as fast as they spring, they be cut down and trod upon; for if they be suffered to grow by numbers, they make the spirit peevish, and the society troublesome, and the affections loose and easy by an habitual aversion. Some men are more vexed with a fly than with a wound; and when the gnats disturb our sleep, and the reason is disquieted but not perfectly awakened, it is often seen that he is fuller of trouble than if, in the daylight of his reason, he were to contest with a potent enemy. In the frequent little accidents of a family, a man's reason cannot always be awake; and when his discourses are imperfect, and a trifling trouble makes him yet more restless, he is soon betrayed to the violence of passion. It is certain that the man or woman are in a state of weakness and folly then, when they can be troubled with a trifling accident; and therefore, it is not good to tempt their affections, when they are in that state of danger. In this case the caution is, to subtract fuel from the sudden flame; for stubble, though it be quickly kindled, yet it is as soon extinguished, if it be not blown by a pertinacious breath, or fed with new materials. Add no new provocations to the accident, and do not inflame this, and peace will soon return, and the discontent will pass away soon, as the sparks from the collision of a flint: ever remembering, that discontents proceeding from daily little things, do breed a secret undiscernible disease, which is more dangerous than a fever proceeding from a discerned notorious surfeit.

4. Let them be sure to abstain from all those things, which by experience and observation they find to be contrary to each other. They that govern elephants, never appear before them in white; and the masters of bulls keep from them all garments of blood and scarlet, as knowing that they will be impatient of civil usages and discipline, when their natures are provoked by their proper antipathies. The ancients in their marital hieroglyphics used to depict Mercury standing by Venus, to signify that by fair language and sweet entreaties, the minds of each other should be united; and hard by them, they would have all deliciousness of manners, compliance and mutual observance to abide.

5. Let the husband and wife infinitely avoid a curious distinction of mine and thine; for this hath caused all the laws, and all the suits, and all the wars, in the world; let them, who have but one person, have also but one interest.—These are the duties of them both, which have common regards and equal necessities and obligations; and, indeed, there is scarce any matter of duty, but it concerns them both alike, and is only distinguished by names, and hath its variety by circumstances and little accidents: and what in one is called 'love,' in the other is called 'reverence,' and what in the wife is 'obedience,' the same in the man is 'duty.' He pro-

vides, and she dispenses ; he gives commandments, and she rules by them ; he rules her by authority, and she rules him by love ; she ought by all means to please him, and he must by no means displease her.

THE LOVE OF A HUSBAND AND FATHER TO HIS FAMILY.

THE marital love is a thing pure as light, sacred as a temple, lasting as the world : when a man dwells in love, then the breasts of his wife are pleasant as the droppings upon the hill of Hermon, her eyes are fair as the light of heaven, she is a fountain sealed, and he can quench his thirst, and ease his cares, and lay his sorrow down upon her lap, and can retire home to his sanctuary and refectory, and his gardens of sweetness and chaste refreshments. No man can tell but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart dance in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges ; their childishness, their stammering, their little angers, their innocence, their imperfections, their necessities, are so many little emanations of joy and comfort to him that delights in their persons and society ; but he that loves not his wife and children, feeds a lioness at home, and broods a nest of sorrows ; and blessing itself cannot make him happy.

THE ADORNING OF THE SOUL RECOMMENDED TO WIVES,

AND THE RECOLLECTION OF DEATH TO MARRIED PERSONS IN GENERAL.

OUTWARD ornament is fit to take fools, but they are not worth the taking ; but she that hath a wise husband, must entice him to an eternal dearness by the veil of modesty and the grave robes of chastity, the ornament of meekness and the jewels of faith and clarity ; she must have no fucus but blushings, her brightness must be purity, and she must shine round about with sweetnesses and friendship, and she shall be pleasant while she lives, and desired when she dies. If not, her grave shall be full of rottenness and dishonour, and her memory shall be worse after she is dead : ' after she is dead ; ' for that will be the end of all merry meetings ; and I choose this to be the last service of both.

" Remember the days of darkness, for they are many ; " the joys of the bridal-chambers are quickly past, and the remaining portion of the state is a dull progress, without variety of joys, but not without the change of sorrows ; but that portion that shall enter into the grave, must be eternal. It is fit that I should infuse a bunch of myrrh into the festival goblet, and, after the Egyptian manner, serve up a dead man's bones at a feast : I will only show it, and take it away again ; it will make the wine bitter, but wholesome. But those married pairs that live, as remembering that they must part again, and give an account how they treat themselves and each other, shall, at that day of their death, be admitted to glorious espousals ; and when they shall live again, be married to their Lord, and partake of his glories, with Abraham and Joseph, St Peter and St Paul, and all the

married saints. 'All those things that now please us shall pass from us, or we from them;' but those things that concern the other life, are permanent as the numbers of eternity: and although at the resurrection there shall be no relation of husband and wife, and no marriage shall be celebrated but the marriage of the Lamb; yet then shall be remembered how men and women passed through this state which is a type of that, and from this sacramental union all holy pairs shall pass to the spiritual and eternal, where love shall be their portion, and joys shall crown their heads, and they shall lie in the bosom of Jesus, and in the heart of God to eternal ages. Amen.

THE HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY OF SIN.

SIN keeps a good house, and is full of company and servants, it is served by the possessions of the world, it is courted by the unhappy, flattered by fools, taken into the bosom by the effeminate, made the end of human designs, and feasted all the way of its progress: wars are made for its interest, and men give or venture their lives that their sin may be prosperous; all the outward senses are its handmaids, and the inward senses are of its privy-chamber; the understanding is its counsellor, the will its friend, riches are its ministers, nature holds up its train, and art is its emissary to promote its interest and affairs abroad: and, upon this account, all the world is enrolled in its taxing-tables, and are subjects or friends of its kingdom, or are so kind to it as to make too often visits, and to lodge in its borders; because all men stare upon its pleasures, and are enticed to taste of its wanton delicacies. But then if we look what are the children of this splendid family, and see what issue sin produces, it may help to untie the charm. Sin and concupiscence marry together, and riot and feast it high, but their fruits, the children and production of their filthy union, are ugly and deformed, foolish and ill-natured; and the Apostle calls them by their name, 'shame,' and 'death.' These are the fruits of sin, 'the apples of Sodom,' fair outsides, but if you touch them, they turn to ashes and a stink; and if you will nurse these children, and give them whatsoever is dear to you, then you may be admitted into the house of feasting and chambers of riot where sin dwells; but if you will have the mother, you must have the daughters; the tree and the fruits go together; and there is none of you all that ever entered into this house of pleasure, but he left the skirts of his garment in the hands of shame, and had his name enrolled in the chambers of death.

THE PLEASURES OF SIN.

1. LET us consider what pleasures there are in sin: most of them are very punishments. I will not reckon or consider concerning envy.—

The leanness, and the secret pangs, and the perpetual restlessness of an envious man, feed upon his own heart, and drink down his spirits, unless he can ruin or observe the fall of the fairest fortunes of his neighbour. The fruits of this tree are mingled and sour, and not to be endured in the very eating. Neither will I reckon the horrid affrightments and amazements of murder, nor the uneasiness of impatience, which doubles every evil that it feels, and makes it a sin, and makes it intolerable ; nor the secret grievings, and continual troubles of peevishness, which makes a man incapable of receiving good, or delighting in beauties and fair entreaties, in the mercies of God and charities of men.

It were easy to make a catalogue of sins, every one of which is a disease, a trouble in its very constitution and its nature : such are loathing of spiritual things, bitterness of spirit, rage, greediness, confusion of mind and irresolution, cruelty and despite, slothfulness and distrust, unquietness and anger, effeminacy and niceness, prating and sloth, ignorance and inconstancy, incogitancy and cursing, malignity and fear, forgetfulness and rashness, pusillanimity and despair, rancour and superstition ; if a man were to curse his enemy, he could not wish him a greater evil than these ; and yet these are several kinds of sin which men choose, and give all their hopes of heaven in exchange for one of these diseases. Is it not a fearful consideration, that a man should rather choose eternally to perish, than to say his prayers heartily and affectionately ? but so it is with very many men ; they are driven to their devotions by custom, and shame, and reputation, and civil compliances ; they sigh and look sour when they are called to it, and abide there as a man under the surgeon's hands, smarting and fretting all the while ; or else he passes the time with incogitancy, and hates the employment, and suffers the torment of prayers which he loves not ; and all this, although for so doing it is certain he may perish : what fruit, what deliciousness, can he fancy in being weary of his prayers ? there is no pretence or colour for these things. Can any man imagine a greater evil to the body and soul of a man than madness, and furious eyes, and a distracted look, paleness with passion, and trembling hands and knees, and furiousness, and folly in the heart and head ? and yet this is the pleasure of anger, and for this pleasure men choose damnation. But it is a great truth, that there are but very few sins that pretend to pleasure : although a man be weak and soon deceived, and the devil is crafty, and sin is false and impudent, and pretences are too many,—yet most kinds of sin are real and prime troubles to the very body, without all manner of deliciousness, even to the sensual, natural, and carnal part ; and a man must put on something of a devil before he can choose such sins, and he must love mischief because it is a sin ; for in most instances there is no other reason in the world. Nothing pretends to pleasure but lust, ambition, and revenge ; and although the catalogue of sins is numerous as the production of fishes, yet these three only can be apt to cozen us with a fair outside ; and yet upon the survey of what fruits they bring, and what taste they have in the manducation, besides the filthy relish they leave behind, we shall see how miserably they are abused and fooled, that expend any thing upon such purchases.

2. For a man cannot take pleasure in lusts of the flesh, in gluttony, or drunkenness, unless he be helped forward with inconsideration and folly. For we see it evidently that grave and wise persons, men of experience and consideration, are extremely less affected with lust and loves than the hare-

brained boy ; the young gentleman that thinks nothing in the world greater than to be free from a tutor, he indeed courts his folly, and enters into the possession of lust without abatement ; consideration dwells not there : but when a sober man meets with a temptation, and is helped by his natural temper, or invited by his course of life ; if he can consider, he hath so many objections and fears, so many difficulties and impediments, such sharp reasonings and sharper jealousies concerning its event, that if he does at all enter into folly, it pleases him so little, that he is forced to do it in despite of himself ; and the pleasure is so allayed, that he knows not whether it be wine or vinegar ; his very apprehension and instruments of relish are filled with fear and contradicting principles, and the deliciousness does but ‘ *affricare cutem*,’ it but ‘ *went to the skin* ;’ but the allay went farther ; it kept a guard within, and suffered the pleasure to pass no farther. A man must resolve to be a fool, a rash inconsiderate person, or he will feel but little satisfaction in the enjoyment of his sin : indeed, he that stops his nose, may drink down such corrupted waters ; so that in effect a man must lose his discerning faculties before he discerns the little fantastic joys of his concupiscence ; which demonstrates how vain, how empty of pleasure that is, that is beholden to folly and illusion, to a juggling and a plain cozenage, before it can be fancied to be pleasant. For it is a strange beauty, that he that hath the best eyes cannot perceive, and none but the blind or blear-eyed people can see ; and such is the pleasure of lust, which, by every degree of wisdom that a man hath, is lessened and undervalued.

3. For the pleasures of intemperance, they are nothing but the relics and images of pleasure, after that nature hath been feasted ; for so long as she needs, that is, so long as temperance waits, so long pleasure also stands there ; but as temperance begins to go away, having done the ministries of nature, every morsel, and every new goblet, is still less delicious, and cannot be endured but as men force nature by violence to stay longer than she would : how have some men rejoiced when they have escaped a cup ! and when they cannot escape, they pour it in, and receive it with as much pleasure as the old women have in the Lapland dances ; they dance the round, but there is a horror and a harshness in the music ; and they call it pleasure, because men bid them do so : but there is a devil in the company, and such as is his pleasure, such is theirs : he rejoices in the thriving sin, and the swelling fortune of his darling drunkenness, but his joys are the joys of him that knows and always remembers, that he shall infallibly have the biggest damnation ; and then let it be considered how forced a joy that is, that is at the end of an intemperate feast. Certain it is, intemperance takes but nature’s leavings ; when the belly is full, and nature calls to take away, the pleasure that comes in afterward is next to loathing : it is like the relish and taste of meats at the end of the third course, or sweetness of honey to him that hath eaten till he can endure to take no more ; all his pleasure is nothing but the sting of a serpent, it wounds the heart, and he dies with a tarantula, dancing and singing till he bows his neck, and kisses his bosom with the fatal noddings and declensions of death.

4. In these pretenders to pleasure (which you see are but few, and they not very prosperous in their pretences), there is mingled so much trouble to bring them to act an enjoyment, that the appetite is above half-tired before it comes ; it is necessary a man should be hugely patient that is ambitious : no man buys death and damnation at so dear a rate, as he that fights

for it, and endures cold and hunger ; “ the heat of the sun, and the cold of the threshold ;” the dangers of war, and the snares of a crafty enemy ; he lies upon the ground with a severity greater than the penances of a hermit, and fasts beyond the austerity of a rare penitent ; with this only difference, that the one does it for heaven, and the other for an uncertain honour, and an eternity of flames. But, however, by this time that he hath won something, he hath spent some years, and he hath not much time left him to rest in his new purchase, and he hath worn out his body, and lessened his capacity of feeling it ; and although it is ten to one he cannot escape all the dangers he must venture at, that he may come near his trifle, yet, when he is arrived thither, he can never long enjoy, nor well perceive or taste it ; and therefore, there are more sorrows at the gate, than there can dwell comforts in all the rooms of the houses of pride and great designs. And thus it is in revenge, which is pleasant only to a devil, or a man of the same cursed temper. He does a thing which ought to trouble him, and will move him to pity, what his own vile hands have acted ; but if he does not pity, that is, be troubled with himself, and wish the things undone, he hath those affections by which the devil doth rejoice in destroying souls ; which affections a man cannot have, unless he be perfectly miserable, by being contrary to God, to mercy, and to felicity ; and, after all, the pleasure is false, fantastic, and violent, it can do him no good, it can do him hurt, it is odds but it will, and on him that takes revenge, revenge shall be taken, and by a real evil he shall dearly pay for the goods that are but airy and fantastical ; it is like a rolling stone, which, when a man hath forced up a hill, will return upon him with a greater violence, and break those bones whose sinews gave it motion. The pleasure of revenge is like the pleasure of eating chalk and coals ; a foolish disease made the appetite, and it is entertained with an evil reward ; the man is restless till it be done, and when it is, every man sees how infinitely he is removed from satisfaction or felicity.

5. These sins when they are entertained with the greatest fondness from without, it must have an extreme little pleasure, because there is a strong faction, and the better party against them : something that is within contests against the entertainment, and they sit uneasily upon the spirit when the man is vexed, that they are not lawful. The Persian king gave Themistocles a goodly pension, assigning Magnesia with the revenue of fifty talents for his bread, Lampsacum for his wine, and Myos for his meat ; but all the while he fed high and drank deep, he was infinitely afflicted that every thing went cross to his undertaking, and he could not bring his ends about to betray his country ; and at last he mingled poison with his wine and drank it off, having first entreated his friends to steal for him a private grave in his own country. Such are the pleasures of the most pompous and flattering sins : their meat and drink are good and pleasant at first, and it is plenteous and criminal ; but its employment is base, it is so against a man’s interest, and against what is, and ought to be, dearest to him, that he cannot persuade his better parts to consent, but must fight against them and all their arguments. These things are against a man’s conscience, that is, against his reason and his rest : and something within makes his pleasure sit uneasily. But so do violent perfumes make the head ache, and therefore wise persons reject them ; and the eye refuses to stare upon the beauties of the sun, because it makes it weep itself blind ;

and if a luscious dish please my palate, and turns to loathing in the stomach, I will lay aside that evil, and consider the danger and the bigger pain, not that little pleasure. So it is in sin; it pleases the senses, but diseases the spirit, and wounds that: and that it is apt to smart as the skin, and is as considerable in the provisions of pleasure and pain respectively; and the pleasure of sin to a contradicting reason, are like the joys of wine to a condemned man.

6. The pleasure in the acts of these few sins that do pretend to it, is a little limited nothing, confined to a single faculty, to one sense, having nothing but the skin for its organ or instrument, an artery, or something not more considerable than a lute string; and at the best, it is but the satisfaction of an appetite which reason can cure, which time can appease, which every diversion can take off; such as is not perfective of his nature, nor of advantage to his person; it is a desire to no purpose, and as it comes with no just cause, so can be satisfied with no just measures; it is satisfied before it comes to a vice, and when it is come thither, all the world cannot satisfy it: a little thing will weary it, but nothing can content it. For all these sensual desires are nothing but an impatience of being well and wise, of being in health, and being in our wits; which two things if a man could endure, (and it is but reasonable, a man would think, that we should) he would never lust to drown his heart in seas of wine, or oppress his belly with loads of undigested meat, or make himself base by the mixtures of a harlot, by breaking the sweetest limits and holy festivities of marriage. As the Spirit of God said concerning Babylon, "Let her have torment and sorrow according to the measure of her delights," is most eminently true in the pleasing of our senses; the lust and desire is a torment, the remembrance and the absence is a torment, and the enjoyment does not satisfy, but disables the instrument, and tires the faculty; and when a man hath but a little of what his sense covets, he is not contented, but impatient for more; and when he hath loads of it, he does not feel it. For he that swallows a full goblet does not taste his wine: and this is the pleasure of the sense; nothing contents it but that which he cannot perceive, and it is always restless, till it be weary; and all the way unpleased, till it can feel no pleasure; and that which is the instrument of sense, is the means of its torment; by the faculty by which it tastes, by the same it is afflicted; for so long as it can taste, it is tormented with desire, and when it can desire no longer, it cannot feel pleasure.

7. Add to this, that the enjoyment of sin so passes away, that nothing at all remains behind it that is pleasant: It is like the path of an arrow in the air; the next morning no man can tell what has become of the pleasures of the last night's sin: they are no where but in God's books, deposited in the conscience, and sealed up against the day of dreadful accounts; but as to the man, they are as if they never had been; and then, let it be considered, what a horrible aggravation it will be to the miseries of damnation, that a man shall for ever perish for that, which if he looks round about he cannot see, nor tell where it is. "He that dies, dies for that which is not;" and in the very little present he finds it an unrewarding interest, to walk seven days together over sharp stones only to see a place from whence he must come back in an hour. If it goes off presently, it is not worth the labour; if it stays long, it grows tedious; so that it cannot be pleasant, if it stays; and if it does stay, it is not to be valued: It abides too little a while to be

felt or called pleasure ; and if it should abide longer, it would be troublesome as pain, and loathed like the tedious speech of an orator pleading against the life of the innocent.

8. Sin hath in its best advantages but a trifling, inconsiderable pleasure : because not only God and reason, conscience and honour, interest and laws, do sour it in the sense and gust of pleasure, but even the devil himself either being overruled by God, or by a strange insignificant malice, makes it troublesome and intricate, entangled and involved ; and one sin contradicts another, and vexes the man with so great variety of evils, that if in the course of God's service he should meet with half the difficulty, he would certainly give over the whole employment. Those that St James speaks of, who "prayed that they might spend it in their lusts," were covetous and prodigal, and therefore must endure the torments of one to have the pleasure of another ; and which is greater, the pleasure of spending, or the displeasure that it is spent and does not still remain after its consumption, it is easy to tell : certain it is that this lasts much longer. Does not the devil often tempt men to despair, and by that torment put bars and locks upon them, that they may never return to God ? Which what else is it but a plain indication, that it is intended the man should feel the images and dreams of pleasure, no longer but till he be without remedy ? Pleasure is but like sentries of wooden frames, set under arches, till they be strong by their own weight and consolidation to stand alone ; and when by any means the devil hath a man sure, he takes no longer care to cozen him with pleasures, but is pleased that men should begin an early hell, and be tormented before the time. Does not envy punish or destroy flattery ; and self-love sometimes torment the drunkard ; and intemperance abate the powers of lust, and laziness become a hindrance to ambition ; and the desires of man wax impatient upon contradicting interests, and by crossing each other's design on all hands lessen the pleasure, and leave the man tormented ?

9. Sin is of so little relish and gust, so trifling a pleasure, that it is always greater in expectation than it is in the possession. But if men did beforehand see what the utmost is, which sin ministers to please the beastly part of man, it were impossible it should be pursued with so much earnestness and disadvantages. It is necessary it should promise more than it can give ; men could not otherwise be cozened. And if it be inquired, why men should sin again, after they had experience of the little and great deception ? it is to be confessed, it is a wonder they should : but then we may remember, that men sin again, though their sin did afflict them ; they will be drunk again, though they were sick ; they will again commit folly, though they be surprised in their shame, though they have needed an hospital ; and therefore there is something else that moves them, and not the pleasure ; for they do it without and against its interest ; but either they still proceed, hoping to supply by numbers what they find not in proper measures ; or God permits them to proceed as an instrument of punishment ; or their understandings and reasonings grow cheaper ; or they grow in love with it, and take it upon any terms ; or contract new appetites, and are pleased with the baser and the lower reward of sin : but whatsoever can be the cause of it, it is certain, by the experience of all the world, that the fancy is higher, the desires more sharp, and the reflection more brisk, at the door and entrance of the entertainment, than in all the little and shorter

periods of its possession: for then it is but limited by the natural measures, and abated by distemper, and loathed by enjoying, and disturbed by partners, and dishonoured by shame and evil accidents; so that as men coming to the river Lucius, and seeing "waters pure" as the tears of the spring, or the pearls of the morning, expect that in such a fair promising bosom, the inmates should be fair and pleasant, but find "the fishes black," filthy, and unwholesome; so it is in sin; its face is fair and beauteous, softer than sleep, or the dreams of wine, tenderer than the curds of milk, more delicate than a Euganean lamb; but when you come to handle it, it is filthy, rough as the porcupine, black as the shadows of the night, and having promised a fish it gives a scorpion, and a stone instead of bread.

10. The fruits of its present possession, the pleasures of its taste, are less pleasant, because no sober person, no man that can discourse, does like it long. He approves it in the height of passion, and in the disguises of a temptation; but at all other times he finds it ugly and unreasonable; and the very remembrances must at all times abate its pleasures, and sour its delicacies. In the most part of a man's life he wonders at his own folly, and prodigious madness, that it should be ever possible for him to be deluded by such trifles; and he sighs next morning, and knows it over night; and is it not therefore certain, that he leans upon a thorn, which he knows will smart, and he dreads the event of to-morrow? But so have I known a bold trooper fight in the confusion of a battle, and being warm with heat and rage, received, from the swords of his enemy, wounds open like a grave; but he felt them not, and when by the streams of blood, he found himself marked for pain, he refused to consider then what he was to feel to-morrow: but when his rage had cooled into the temper of a man, and clammy moisture had checked the fiery emission of spirits, he wonders at his own boldness, and blames his fate, and needs a mighty patience to bear his great calamity. So is the bold and merry sinner, when he is warm with wine and lust, wounded and bleeding with the strokes of hell, he twists with the fatal arm that strikes him, and cares not; but yet it must abate his gaiety, because he remembers that when his wounds are cold and considered, he must roar or perish, repent or do worse, that is, be miserable or undone. Dion Prusias reports, that when the Persians had got the victory, they would pick out the noblest slave, "they make him a king for three days, and clothe him with royal robes, and minister to him all the pleasure he can choose, and all the while he knows he is to die a sacrifice to mirth and folly." But then, let it be remembered, what checks and allays of mirth the poor man starts at, when he remembers the axe and the altar where he must shortly bleed; and by this we may understand what that pleasure is, in the midst of which the man sighs deeply, when he considers what opinion he had of this sin, in the days of counsel and sober thoughts; and what reason against it, he shall feel to-morrow, when he must weep or die.

THE SHAMEFULNESS OF SIN.

EVERY sin hath an evil spirit, a devil of its own, to manage, to conduct, and to imbitter it : and although all these are God's enemies, and have an appendant shame in their retinue, yet to some sins shame is more appropriate, and a proper ingredient in their constitutions: such as are lying, and lust, and vow-breach, and inconstancy. God sometimes cures the pride of a man's spirit by suffering his evil manners, and filthy inclination, to be determined upon lust; lust makes a man afraid of public eyes, and common voices; it is (as all sins else are, but this especially) a work of darkness; it does debauch the spirit, and make it to decay and fall off from courage and resolution, constancy and severity, the spirit of government and a noble freedom; and those punishments, which the nations of the world have inflicted upon it, are not smart so much as shame: lustful souls are cheap and easy, trifling and despised, in all wise accounts; they are so far from being fit to sit with princes, that they dare not chastise a sinning servant that is private to their secret follies; it is strange to consider what laborious arts of concealment, what excuses and lessenings, what pretences and fig-leaves, men will put before their nakedness and crimes; shame was the first thing that entered upon the sin of Adam: and when the second world began, there was a strange scene of shame acted by Noah and his sons, and it ended in slavery and baseness to all descending generations.

We see the event of this by too sad an experience. What arguments, what hardness, what preaching, what necessity, can persuade men to confess their sins? They are so ashamed of them, that to be concealed they prefer before their remedy; and yet in penitential confession the shame is going off; it is like Cato's coming out of the theatre, or the philosopher from the tavern; it might have been shame to have entered, but glory to have departed for ever; and yet ever to have relation to sin is so shameful a thing, that a man's spirit is amazed, and his face is confounded, when he is dressed of so shameful a disease. And there are but few men that will endure it, but rather choose to involve it in excuses and denial, in the clouds of lying, and the white linen of hypocrisy: and yet, when they make a veil for their shame, such is the fate of sin, the shame grows the bigger and the thicker; we lie to men, and we excuse it to God; either some parts of lying or many parts of impudence, darkness or forgetfulness, running away or running farther in, these are the covers of our shame, like menstruous rags upon a skin of leprosy: but so sometimes we see a decayed beauty besmeared with a lying fucus, and the chinks filled with ceruse; besides that it makes no real beauty, it spoils the face, and betrays evil manners: it does not hide old age, or the change of years, but it discovers pride or lust; it was not shame to be old, or wearied and worn out with age, but it is a shame to dissemble nature by a wanton vizard. So sin retires from blushing into shame; if it be discovered, it is not to be endured, and if we go to hide it, we make it worse. But then if we remember how ambitious we are for fame and reputation, for honour and a fair opinion, for a good name all our days, and when our days are done; and that no ingenuous man can enjoy any thing he hath, if he lives in disgrace; and

that nothing so breaks a man's spirit as dishonour, and the meanest person alive does not think himself fit to be despised ; we are to consider into what an evil condition sin puts us, for which we are not only disgraced and disparaged here; marked with disgraceful punishments, despised by good men, our follies derided, our company avoided, and hooted at by boys, talked of in fairs and markets, pointed at and described by appellatives of scorn, and every body can chide us, and we die unpitied, and lie in our graves eaten up by worms, and a foul dishonour ; but after all this, at the day of judgment, we shall be called from our charnel-houses, where our disgrace could not sleep, and shall, in the face of God, in the presence of angels and devils, before all good men and all the evil, see and feel the shame of all our sins written upon our foreheads : here in this state of misery and folly we make nothing of it ; and though we dread to be discovered to men, yet to God we confess our sins without a trouble or a blush ; but tell an even story, because we find some forms of confession prescribed in our prayer-books ; and, that it may appear how indifferent and unconcerned we seem to be, we read and say all, and confess the sins we never did, with as much sorrow and regret, as those we have acted a thousand times. But in that strange day of recompenses, we shall find the devil to upbraid the criminal, Christ to disown them, the angels to drive them from the seat of mercy, and shame to be their smart, the consigning them to damnation ; they shall then find, that they cannot dwell where virtue is rewarded, and where honour and glory have a throne ; there is no veil but what is rent, no excuse to any but to them that are declared as innocent : no circumstances concerning the wicked to be considered, but them that aggravate ; then the disgrace is not confined to the talk of a village, or a province, but is scattered to all the world : not only in one age shall the shame abide, but the men of all generations shall see and wonder at the vastness of that evil that is spread upon the souls of sinners for ever and ever. No night shall then hide it ; for in those regions of darkness where the dishonoured man shall dwell for ever, there is nothing visible but the shame ; there is light enough for that, but darkness for all things else : and then he shall reap the full harvest of his shame ; all that for which wise men scorned him, and all that for which God hated him ; all that in which he was a fool, and all that in which he was malicious ; that which was public, and that which was private ; that which fools applauded, and that which himself durst not own ; the secrets of his lust, and the criminal contrivances of his thoughts ; the base and odious circumstances, and the frequency of the action, and the partner of his sin ; all that which troubles his conscience, and all that he willingly forgets,—shall be proclaimed by the trumpet of God, by the voice of an archangel, in the great congregation of spirits and just men.

SILENCE AND CONVERSATION COMPARED.

HE that had an ill memory, did wisely comfort himself by reckoning the advantages he had by his forgetfulness. For by this means he was hugely secured against malice and ambition ; for his anger went off with the short notice and observation of the injury ; and he saw himself unfit for the

business of other men, or to make records in his head, and undertake to conduct the intrigues or affairs of a multitude, who was apt to forget the little accounts of his own seldom reading. He also remembered this, that his pleasures in reading books were more frequent, while he remembered but little of yesterday's study, and to-morrow the book is news, and, with its novelties, gives him fresh entertainment, while the retaining brain lays the book aside, and is full already. Every book is new to an ill memory, and one long book is a library, and its parts return fresh as the morning, which becomes a new day, though by the revolution of the same sun. Besides these, it brought him to tell truth for fear of shame, and in mere necessity made his speech little, and his discoursings short; because the web drawn from his brain was soon spun out, and his fountain grew quickly dry, and left running through forgetfulness. He that is not eloquent and fair-spoken, hath some of these comforts to plead in excuse of his ill fortune or defective nature. For if he can but hold his peace, he shall be sure not to be troublesome to his company, nor marked for lying, nor become tedious with multiplicity of idle talk; he shall be presumed wise, and oftentimes is so; he shall not feel the wounds of contention, nor be put to excuse an ill-taken saying, nor sigh for the folly of an irrecoverable word; if his fault be that he hath not spoken, that can at any time be mended, but if he sinned in speaking, it cannot be unspoken again. Thus he escapes the dishonour of not being believed, and the trouble of being suspected; he shall never fear the sentences of judges, nor the decrees of courts, high reproaches, or the angry words of the proud, the contradiction of the disputing man, or the thirst of talkers. By these, and many other advantages, he that holds his peace, and he that cannot speak, may please themselves; and he may at least have the rewards and effects of solitariness, if he misses some of the pleasures of society. But by the use of the tongue, God hath distinguished us from beasts, and by the well or ill using it, we are distinguished from one another; and therefore, though silence be innocent as death, harmless as a rose's breath to a distant passenger, yet it is rather the state of death than life. The tongue is the band of human intercourse, and makes men apt to unite in societies and republics: and I remember what one of the ancients said, that we are better in the company of a known dog, than of a man whose speech is not known. "A stranger to a stranger in his language, is not as a man to a man;" for by voices and homilies, by questions and answers, by narratives and invectives, by counsel and reproof, by praises and hymns, by prayers and glorifications, we serve God's glory, and the necessities of men; and by the tongue our tables are made to differ from mangers, our cities from deserts, our churches from herds of beasts, and flocks of sheep. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," spoken by the tongues of men and angels; and the blessed spirits in heaven cease not from singing, night and day, "their song of glory," to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever; and then our employment shall be glorious as our state, when our tongues shall to eternal ages sing hallelujahs to their Maker and Redeemer; and therefore, since nature hath taught us to speak, and God requires it, and our thankfulness obliges us, and our necessities engage us, and charity sometimes calls for it, and innocence is to be defended, and we are to speak in the cause of the oppressed, and open our mouths in the cause of God, and it is always a seasonable prayer, that God

would open our lips, that our mouth may do the work of heaven, and declare his praises, and show forth his glory ; it concerns us to take care that nature be changed into grace, necessity into choice, that, while we speak the greatness of God, and minister to the needs of our neighbour, and do the works of life and religion, of society and prudence, we may be fitted to bear a part in the songs of angels, when they shall rejoice at the feast of the marriage supper of the Lamb. But the tongue is a fountain both of bitter waters and of pleasant ; it sends forth blessing, and cursing ; it praises God, and rails at men ; it is sometimes set on fire, and then it puts whole cities in combustion ; it is unruly, and no more to be restrained than the breath of a tempest ; it is volatile and fugitive : reason should go before it, and when it does not, repentance comes after it ; it was intended for an organ of the divine praises, but the devil often plays upon it, and then it sounds like the screech-owl, or the groans of death ; sorrow and shame, folly and repentance, are the notes and formidable accents of that discord.

FOOLISH TALKING, OR STULTILOQUY.

CONCERNING stultiloquy, it is to be observed, that the masters of spiritual life mean not, the talk and useless babble of weak and ignorant persons ; because in their proportions they may serve their little mistaken ends of civility and humanity, as seemingly to them, as the strictest and most observed words of the wiser ; if it be their best, their folly may be pitied, but not reproved ; and to them there is no caution to be added, but that it were well if they would put the bridle into the hands of another, who may give them check when themselves cannot ; and no wisdom can be required or useful to them, but to suspect themselves and choose to be conducted by another. For so the little birds and laborious bees,—who, having no art and power of contrivance, no distinction of time, or foresight of new necessities, yet, being guided by the hand, and counselled by the wisdom, of the Supreme Power, their Lord and ours,—do things with greater niceness and exactness of art, and regularity of time, and certainty of effect, than the wise counsellor, who, standing at the back of the prince's chair, guesses imperfectly, and counsels timorously, and thinks by interest, and determines extrinsical events by inward and unconcerning principles ; because these have understanding, but is less than the infinity of accidents and contingencies without ; but the other having none, are wholly guided by him that knows and determines all things : so it is in the imperfect designs, and actions, and discourses of weaker people ; if they can be ruled by an understanding without, when they have none within, they shall receive this advantage, that their own passions shall not transport their minds, and the divisions and weakness of their own sense and notices shall not make them uncertain and indeterminate ; and the measures they shall walk by, shall be disinterested, and even, and dispassionate, and full of observation.

But that which is here meant by foolish speaking, is ‘ the slipping with the tongue,’ as St Ambrose calls it, which prating people often suffer, whose discourses betray the vanity of their spirit, and discover ‘ the hidden

man of the heart.' For no prudence is a sufficient guard, or can always stand 'still watching,' when a man is in perpetual floods of talk: for prudence attends after the manner of an angel's ministry; it is despatched on messages from God, and drives away enemies, and places guards, and calls upon the man to awake, and bids him send out spies and observers, and then goes about his own ministries above; but an angel does not sit by a man, as a nurse by the baby's cradle, watching every motion, and the lighting of a fly upon the child's lip: and so is prudence; it gives rules, and proportions out our measures, and prescribes us cautions, and, by general influences, orders our particulars; but he that is given to talk, cannot be secured by all this; the emissions of his tongue are beyond the general figures and lines of rule; and he can no more be wise in every period of a long and running talk, than a lutanist can deliberate and make every motion of his hand by the division of his notes, to be chosen and distinctly voluntary. And hence it comes, that at every corner of the mouth a folly peeps out, or a mischief creeps in. A little pride and a great deal of vanity will soon escape, while the man minds the sequel of his talk, and not that ugliness of humour, which the severe man, that stood by, did observe, and was ashamed of. Do not many men talk themselves into anger, screwing up themselves with dialogues of fancy, till they forget the company and themselves? And some men hate to be contradicted, or interrupted, or to be discovered in their folly; and some men being a little conscious, and not striving to amend by silence, they make it worse by discourse; a long story of themselves,—a tedious praise of another collaterally to do themselves advantage,—a declamation against a sin to undo the person, or oppress the reputation, of their neighbour,—unseasonable repetition of that which neither profits nor delights,—trifling contentions about a goat's beard, or the blood of an oyster,—anger and animosity, spite and rage,—scorn and reproach begun upon questions which concern neither of the litigants,—fierce disputations,—strivings for what is past, and for what shall never be: these are the events of the loose and unwary tongue; which are like flies and gnats upon the margin of a pool; they do not sting like an asp, or bite deep as a bear; yet they can vex a man into a fever and impatience, and make him incapable of rest and counsel.

JESTINGS WHICH ARE NOT CONVENIENT.

IN pursuance of this of St Paul, the fathers of the church have been very severe in the censures of this liberty. St Ambrose forbids all: "Not only the looser jestings, but even all are to be avoided." St Basil gives reason for this severity, that cannot be denied; those persons whose souls are dispersed and ungathered by reason of a wanton humour to intemperate jesting, are apt to be trifling in their religion. St Jerome is of the same opinion, and adds a commandment of a full authority, if at least the record was right; for he quotes a saying of our blessed Saviour out of the Gospel of the Nazarenes; "Never be merry, but when you see your brother in charity:" and when you are merry, St James hath appointed a proper expression of it, and a fair entertainment to the passion; "If any man be

merry, let him sing psalms." But St Bernard, who is also strict in this particular, yet he adds the temper. Though jestings be not fit for a Christian, "if they seldom happen, they are to be borne, but never to be returned and made a business of; but we must rather interpose warily and prudently to hinder the growth and progress of the trifle."

But concerning this case of conscience, we are to remember, these holy persons found jesting to be a trade; and this trade, besides its own unworthiness, was mingled with infinite impieties; and in the institution, and in all the circumstances of its practice, was not only against all prudent severity, but against modesty and chastity, and was a license in disparagement of virtue; and the most excellent things and persons were by it undervalued; so that in this throng of evil circumstances finding a humour placed, which, without infinite wariness, could never pretend to innocence, it is no wonder they forbade all; and so also did St Paul upon the same account. And in the same state of reproof to this day, are all that do as they did: such as are professed jesters, people that play the fool for money, whose employment and study is to unclothe themselves of the covers of reason or modesty, that they may be laughed at. And let it be considered, how miserable every sinner is, if he does not deeply and truly repent; and when the man is wet with tears, and covered with sorrow, crying out mightily against his sins, how ugly will it look when this is remembered, the next day, that he plays the fool, and raises his laughter louder than his prayers and yesterday's groans, for no interest but that he may eat! A penitent and a jester is like a Grecian piece of money, on which were stamped a Helena on one side, and a Hecuba on the other, a rose and a deadly aconite, a Paris and an Æsop,—nothing was more contrary. But the whole state of this question is briefly this:

1. If jesting be unseasonable, it is also intolerable.
2. If it be immoderate, it is criminal, and a little thing here makes the excess; it is so in the confines of folly, that, as soon as it is out of doors, it is in the regions of sin.
3. If it be in an ordinary person, it is dangerous; but if in an eminent, a consecrated, a wise, and extraordinary person, it is scandalous.
4. If the matter be not of an indifferent nature, it becomes sinful by giving countenance to vice, or making virtue to become ridiculous.
5. If it be not watched that it complies with all that hear, it becomes offensive and injurious.
6. If it be not intended to fair and lawful purposes, it is sour in the using.
7. If it be frequent, it combines and clusters into a formal sin.
8. If it mingles with any sin, it puts on the nature of that new unworthiness, besides the proper ugliness of the thing itself; and, after all these, when can it be lawful or apt for Christian entertainment?

Yet ecclesiastical history reports of many holy men, that they were facetious, sweet, and more lively in conversation; and, indeed, plaisance, and joy, and a lively spirit, and a pleasant conversation, and the innocent caresses of a charitable humanity is not forbidden; our conversation is commanded to be such, "that it may minister grace," that is, favour, complaisance, cheerfulness; and be acceptable and pleasant to the hearer: and so must be our conversation; it must be as far from sullenness as it ought to be from lightness, and a cheerful spirit is the best convoy for religion; and though

sadness does in some cases become a Christian, as being an index of a pious mind, of compassion, and a wise, proper resentment of things, yet it serves but one end, being useful in the only instance of repentance; and hath done its greatest works, not when it weeps and sighs, but when it hates and grows careful against sin. But cheerfulness and a festival spirit fill the soul full of harmony, it composes music for churches and hearts, it makes and publishes glorifications of God, it produces thankfulness, and serves the end of charity: and when the oil of gladness runs over, it makes bright and tall emissions of light and holy fires, reaching up to a cloud, and making joy round about: and therefore, since it is so innocent, and may be so pious and full of holy advantage, whatsoever can innocently minister to this holy joy, does set forward the work of religion and charity. And, indeed, charity itself, which is the vertical top of all religion, is nothing else but a union of joys, concentrated in the heart, and reflected from all the angles of our life and intercourse. It is a rejoicing in God, a gladness in our neighbour's good, a pleasure in doing good, a rejoicing with him; and without love we cannot have any joy at all. It is this that makes children to be a pleasure, and friendship to be so noble and divine a thing; and upon this account it is certain, that all that which can innocently make a man cheerful, does also make him charitable; for grief, and age, and sickness, and weariness, these are peevish and troublesome; but mirth and cheerfulness are content, and civil, and compliant, and communicative, and love to do good, and swell up to felicity only upon the wings of charity. Upon this account, here is pleasure enough for a Christian at present; and if a facetie discourse, and an amicable friendly mirth, can refresh the spirit, and take it off from the vile temptation of peevish, despairing, uncomplaining melancholy, it must needs be innocent and commendable. And we may as well be refreshed by a clean and a brisk discourse, as by the air of Campanian wines; and our faces and our heads may as well be anointed and look pleasant with wit and friendly intercourse, as with the fat of the balm-tree; and such a conversation no wise man ever did, or ought to reprove. But when the jest hath teeth and nails, biting or scratching our brother,—when it is loose and wanton,—when it is unseasonable,—and much, or many,—when it serves ill purposes, or spends better time,—then it is the drunkenness of the soul, and makes the spirit fly away, seeking for a temple where the mirth and the music are solemn and religious.

But, above all the abuses which ever dishonoured the tongues of men, nothing more deserves the whip of an exterminating angel, or the stings of scorpions, than profane jesting; which is a bringing of the Spirit of God to partake of the follies of a man; as if it were not enough for a man to be a fool, but the wisdom of God must be brought into those horrible scenes: he that makes a jest of the words of Scripture, or of holy things, plays with thunder, and kisses the mouth of a cannon just as it belches fire and death; he stakes heaven at spurn-point, and trips cross and pile whether ever he shall see the face of God or no; he laughs at damnation, while he had rather lose God than lose his jest; nay (which is the horror of all), he makes a jest of God himself, and the Spirit of the Father and the Son to become ridiculous. Some men use to read Scripture on their knees, and many with their heads uncovered, and all good men with fear and trembling, with reverence and grave attention. "Search the Scriptures, for therein ye hope to have life eternal;" and, "All Scripture is written by

inspiration of God, and is fit for instruction, for reproof, for exhortation, for doctrine," not for jesting ; but he that makes that use of it, had better part with his eyes in jest, and give his heart to make a tennis-ball ; and, that I may speak the worst thing in the world of it, it is as like the material part of the sin against the Holy Ghost, as jeering of a man is to abusing him ; and no man can use it but he that wants wit and manners, as well as he wants religion.

REVEALING OF SECRETS.

THE third instance of the vain, trifling conversation and immoderate talking, is, revealing secrets ; which is a dismantling and renting of the robe from the privacies of human intercourse ; and it is worse than denying to restore that which was intrusted to our charge ; for this not only injures his neighbour's right, but throws it away, and exposes it to his enemy ; it is a denying to give a man his own arms, and delivering them to another, by whom he shall suffer mischief. He that intrusts a secret to his friend, goes thither as to a sanctuary, and to violate the rites of that is sacrilege, and profanation of friendship, which is the sister of religion, and the mother of secular blessing ; a thing so sacred, that it changes a kingdom into a church, and makes interest to be piety, and justice to become religion. But this mischief grows according to the subject-matter, and its effect ; and the tongue of a babler may crush a man's bones, or break his fortune upon her own wheel ; and whatever the effect be, yet of itself it is the betraying of a trust, and, by reproach, oftentimes passes on to intolerable calamities, like a criminal to his scaffold through the execrable gates of cities ; and, though it is infinitely worse that the secret is laid open out of spite or treachery, yet it is more foolish when it is discovered for no other end but to serve the itch of talking, or to seem to know, or to be accounted worthy of a trust ; for so some men open their cabinets, to show only that a treasure is laid up, and that themselves were valued by their friend, when they were thought capable of a secret ; but they shall be so no more, for he that by that means goes in pursuit of reputation, loses the substance by snatching at the shadow, and, by desiring to be thought worthy of a secret, proves himself unworthy of friendship or society. Davila tells of a French marquis, young and fond, to whom the duke of Guise had conveyed notice of the intended massacre ; which when he had whispered into the king's ear, where there was no danger of publication, but only would seem a person worthy of such a trust, he was instantly ordered, lest a vanity like that might unlock so horrid a mystery.

I have nothing more to add concerning this, but that if this vanity happens in the matters of religion, it puts on some new circumstances of deformity : and if he, that ministers to the souls of men, and is appointed to "restore him that is overtaken in a fault," shall publish the secrets of a conscience, he prevaricates the bands of nature and religion ; instead of a father, he turns "an accuser ;" he weakens the hearts of the penitent, and drives the repenting man from his remedy by making it to be intolerable ; and so religion becomes a scandal, and his duty is made his disgrace, and Christ's yoke does bow his head unto the ground, and the secrets of the

Spirit pass into the flames of the world, and all the sweetnesses by which the severity of the duty are alleviated and made easy, are embittered and become venomous by the tongue of a talking fool.

PROFANE SWEARING.

AGAINST the vice of common swearing, St Chrysostom spends twenty homilies: and by the number and weight of arguments hath left this testimony, that it is a foolish vice, but hard to be cured; infinitely unreasonable, but strangely prevailing; almost as much without remedy, as it is without pleasure; for it enters first by folly, and grows by custom, and dwells with carelessness, and is nursed by irreligion, and want of the fear of God; it profanes the most holy things, and mingles dirt with the beams of the sun, follies and trifling talk interweaved and knit together with the sacred name of God; it placeth the most excellent of things in the meanest and basest circumstances, it brings the secrets of heaven into the streets, dead men's bones into the temple; nothing is a greater sacrilege than to prostitute the great name of God to the petulance of an idle tongue, and blend it as an expletive to fill up the emptiness of a weak discourse. The name of God is so sacred, so mighty, that it rends mountains, it opens the bowels of the deepest rocks, it casts out devils, and makes hell to tremble, and fills all the regions of heaven with joy; the name of God is our strength and confidence, the object of our worshippings, and the security of all our hopes; and when God had given himself a name, he immured it with dread and reverence, like the garden of Eden with the swords of cherubim.

Now, all these great things concerning the name of God, are infinite reproofs of common and vain swearing by it; God's name is left us here to pray by, to hope in, to be the instrument and conveyance of our worshippings, to be the witness of truth and the judge of secrets, the end of strife and the avenger of perjury, the discerners of right and the severe exacter of all wrongs; and shall all this be unhallowed by impudent talking of God without sense, or fear, or notice, or reverence, or observation?

One thing more I have to add against this vice of a foolish tongue, and that is, that, as much prating fills the discourse with lying, so this trifling swearing changes every trifling lie into a horrid perjury; and this was noted by St James: "But, above all things, swear not at all, that ye may not fall into condemnation:"* so we read it, following the Arabian, Syrian, and Latin books, and some Greek copies; and it signifies, that all such swearing, and putting fierce appendages to every word, like great iron bars to a straw basket or the curtains of a tent, is a direct condemnation of ourselves: for while we by much talking regard truth too little, and yet bind up our trifles with so severe a band, we are condemned by our own words; for men are made to expect what you bound upon them by an oath, and account your trifle to be serious; of which when you fail, you have given sentence against yourself: and this is agreeable to those words of our blessed Saviour, "Of every idle word you shall give account;"†—"for by thy words thou shalt be condemned, and by thy words

* Chap. v. 12.

† Matt. xii.

thou shalt be justified." But there is another reading of these words, which hath great emphasis and power, in this article, "Swear not at all, that you may not fall *into hypocrisy*," that is, into the disreputation of a lying, deceiving, cozening person: for he that will put his oath to every common word, makes no great matter of an oath; for in swearing commonly, he must needs sometimes swear without consideration, and therefore without truth; and he that does so, in any company, tells the world he makes no great matter of being perjured.

All these things put together, may take off our wonder at St James's expression of "*above all things* swear not;" it is a thing so highly to be regarded, and yet is so little considered, that it is hard to say, whether there be in the world any instance, in which men are so careless of their danger and damnation, as in this.

THE FACULTY OF SPEECH TO BE EMPLOYED FOR THE CONSOLATION OF THE SORROWFUL.

OUR conversation must be "apt to comfort" the disconsolate; and than this, men in present can feel no greater charity: for, since half the duty of a Christian in this life consists in the exercise of passive graces, and the infinite variety of Providence, and the perpetual adversity of chances, and the dissatisfaction and emptiness that are in things themselves, and the weariness and anguish of our spirit, do call us to the trial and exercise of patience, even in the days of sunshine, and much more in the violent storms that shake our dwellings, and make our hearts tremble; God hath sent some angels into the world, whose office is to refresh the sorrows of the poor, and to lighten the eyes of the disconsolate; he hath made some creatures whose powers are chiefly ordained to comfort; wine, and oil, and society, cordials, and variety; and time itself is chequered with black and white; stay but till to-morrow, and your present sorrow will be weary, and will lie down to rest. But this is not all. The third person of the holy Trinity is known to us by the name and dignity of the "Holy Ghost, the Comforter," and God glories in the appellative, that he is "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" and therefore, to minister in the office, is to become like God, and to imitate the charities of heaven; and God hath fitted mankind for it: he most needs it, and he feels his brother's wants, by his own experience; and God hath given us speech, and the endearments of society, and pleasantness of conversation, and powers of seasonable discourse, arguments to allay the sorrow, by abating our apprehensions and taking out the sting, or telling the periods of comfort, or exciting hope, or urging a precept, and reconciling our affections, and reciting promises, or telling stories of the divine mercy, or changing it into duty, or making the burden less by comparing it with greater, or by proving it to be less than we deserve, and that it is so intended, and may become the instrument of virtue. And, certain it is, that as nothing can better do it, so there is nothing greater, for which God made our tongues, next to reciting his praises, than to minister comfort to a weary soul. And what greater pleasure can we have, than that we should bring joy to our brother, who, with his dreary eyes, looks to heaven and round about, and cannot

find so much rest as to lay his eyelids close together: than that thy tongue should be tuned with heavenly accents, and make the weary soul to listen for light and ease, and when he perceives that there is such a thing in the world, and in the order of things, as comfort and joy, to begin to break out from the prison of his sorrows, at the door of sighs and tears, and, by little and little, melt into showers and refreshment? This is glory to thy voice, and employment fit for the brightest angel. But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer: so is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter; he breaks from the despairs of the grave, and the fetters and chains of sorrow; he blesses God, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be comforted; and God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving-songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing, and comforted, and thankful persons. This part of communication does the work of God and of our neighbours, and bears us to heaven on streams of joy made by the overflowings of our brother's comfort. It is a fearful thing to see a man despairing. None knows the sorrow and the intolerable anguish but themselves, and they that are damned; and so are all the loads of a wounded spirit, when the staff of a man's broken fortune bows his head to the ground, and sinks like an osier under the violence of a mighty tempest. But therefore, in proportion to this, I may tell the excellency of the employment, and the duty of that charity, which bears the dying and languishing soul from the fringes of hell, to the seat of the brightest stars, where God's face shines, and reflects comforts, for ever and ever. And though God hath, for this, especially intrusted his ministers and servants of the church, and hath put into their hearts and notices great magazines of promises, and arguments of hope, and arts of the Spirit, yet God does not always send angels on these embassies, but sends a man, "that every good man in his season, may be to his brother in the place of God," to comfort and restore him; and that it may appear, how much it is the duty of us all to minister comfort to our brother, we may remember, that the same words and the same arguments do oftentimes more prevail upon our spirits, when they are applied by the hand of another, than when they dwell in us, and come from our own discouragements. This is indeed "to the edification of our needs," and the greatest and most holy charity.

CAUTIONS HOW TO HEAR SERMONS.

1. IT were well if men would not inquire after the learning of the sermon, or its deliciousness to the ear or fancy, but observe its usefulness, not what concerns the preacher, but what concerns themselves; not what

may take a vain reflection upon him, but what may substantially serve their own needs; that the attending to his discourses may not be spent in vain talk concerning him or his disparagements, but may be used as a duty and a part of religion, to minister to edification and instruction. When St John reckoned the principles of evil actions, he told but of three,—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But there was then also in the world (and now it is grown into age, and strength, and faction,) another lust, the lust of the ear,—and a fifth also, the lust of the tongue. Some people have an insatiable appetite in hearing: and hear only that they may hear, and talk, and make a party: they enter into their neighbour's house to kindle their candle, and espying there a glaring fire, sit down upon the hearth, and warm themselves all day, and forget their errand; and, in the meantime, their own fires are not lighted, nor their families instructed or provided for, nor any need served, but a lazy pleasure, which is useless and impudent. Hearing or reading sermons, is, or ought to be, in order to practice: for so God intended it, that faith should come by hearing, and that charity should come by faith, and by both together we may be saved. For a man's ears (as Plutarch calls them) are 'the handles of the virtues;' by them we are to hold and apprehend virtue; and unless we use them as men do vessels of dishonour, filling them with things fit to be thrown away, with any thing that is not necessary, we are by them more nearly brought to God than by all the senses besides. For although things placed before the eye, affect the mind more readily than the things we usually hear; yet the reason of that is, because we hear carelessly, and we hear variety: the same species dwells upon the eye, and represents the same object in union and single representment; but the objects of the ear are broken into fragments of periods, and words, and syllables, and must be attended with a careful understanding: and because every thing diverts the sound, and every thing calls off the understanding, and the spirit of a man is truantly and trifling; therefore it is, that what men hear, does so little affect them, and so weakly work towards the purposes of virtue: and yet nothing does so affect the mind of man as those voices, to which we cannot choose but attend; and thunder and all loud voices from heaven rend the most stormy heart, and make the most obstinate pay to God the homage of trembling and fear; and the still voice of God usually takes the tribute of love, and choice, and obedience. Now, since hearing is so effective an instrument of conveying impressions and images of things, and exciting purposes, and fixing resolutions, unless we hear weakly and imperfectly; it will be of the greater concernment that we be curious to hear in order to such purposes, which are perfective of the soul and of the spirit, and not to dwell in fancy and speculation, in pleasures and trifling arrests, which continue the soul in its infancy and childhood, never letting it go forth into the wisdoms and virtues of a man. I have read concerning Dionysius of Sicily, that, being delighted extremely with a minstrel that sung well, and struck his harp dexterously, he promised to give him a great reward, and that raised the fancy of the man, and made him play better. But when the music was done, and the man waited for his great hope, the king dismissed him empty, telling him, that he should carry away as much of the promised reward as himself did of the music, and that he had paid him sufficiently with the pleasure of the promise for the pleasure of the song: both their ears had been equally delighted, and

the profit just none at all. So it is in many men's hearing sermons : they admire the preacher, and he pleases their ears, and neither of them both bear along with them any good ; and the hearer hath as little good by the sermon, as the preacher by the air of the people's breath, when they make a noise, and admire, and understand not. And that also is a second caution I desire all men would take.

2. That they may never trouble the affairs of preaching and hearing respectively, with admiring the person of any man. To admire a preacher is such a reward of his pains and worth, as if you should crown a conqueror with a garland of roses, or a bride with laurel ; it is an indecency, it is no part of the reward which could be intended for him. For though it be a good-natured folly, yet it hath in it much danger : for by that means the preacher may lead his hearers captive, and make them servants of a faction, or of a lust ; it makes them so much the less to be servants of Christ, by how much they call any man 'master upon earth;' it weakens the heart and hands of others : it places themselves in a rank much below their proper station, changing from hearing the word of God, to admiration of the persons and faces of men ; and it being a fault that falls upon the more easy natures and softer understandings, does more easily abuse a man. And though such a person may have the good fortune to admire a good man and a wise ; yet it is an ill disposition, and makes him liable to every man's abuse. And, besides this, that preacher, whom some do admire, others will most certainly envy ; and that also is to be provided against with diligence ; and you must not admire too forwardly, for your own sake, lest you fall into the hands of a worse preacher ; and for his sake, whom, when you admire, you also love, for others will be apt to envy him.

3. But that must by all men be avoided ; for envy is the worst counsellor in the world, and the worst hearer of a wise discourse. I pity those men who live upon flattery and wonder, and while they sit at the foot of the doctor's chair, stare in his face, and cry, "Rarely spoken, admirably done!" They are like callow and unfeathered birds, gaping perpetually to be fed from another's mouth, and they never come to the knowledge of the truth ; such a knowledge as is effective, and expressed in a prudent and holy life. But those men that envy the preacher, besides that they are great enemies of the Holy Ghost, and are spitefully evil, because God is good to him, they are also enemies to themselves. He that envies the honours or riches of another, envies for his own sake, and he would fain be rich with that wealth, which sweats in his neighbour's coffers : but he that envies him that makes good sermons, envies himself, and is angry because himself may receive the benefit, and be improved, or delighted, or instructed by another. He that is apt fondly to admire any man's person, must cure himself by considering, that the preacher is God's minister and servant ; that he speaks God's word, and does it by the divine assistance ; that he hath nothing of his own but sin and imperfection ; that he does but his duty, and that also hardly enough ; that he is highly answerable for his talent, and stands deeply charged with the cure of souls ; and therefore, that he is to be highly esteemed for the work's sake, not for the person ; his industry and charity are to be beloved, his ability is to be accounted upon another stock, and for it the preacher and the hearer are both to give God thanks ; but nothing is due to the man for that, save only that it is the rather to be employed, because by it we may better be instructed :

but if any other reflection be made upon his person, it is next to the sin and danger of Herod and the people, when the fine oration was made “with huge fancy :” the people were pleased, and Herod was admired, and God was angry, and an angel was sent to strike him with death and with dishonour. But the envy against a preacher is to be cured by a contrary discourse ; and we must remember, that he is in the place of God, and hath received the gift of God, and the aids of the Holy Ghost ; that by his abilities God is glorified, and we are instructed, and the interests of virtue and holy religion are promoted ; that by this means God, who deserves that all souls should serve him for ever, is likely to have a fairer harvest of glory and service ; and, therefore, that envy is against him ; that if we envy because we are not the instrument of this good to others, we must consider, that we desire the praise to ourselves, not to God. Admiration of a man supposes him to be inferior to the person so admired, but then he is pleased so to be ; but envy supposes him as low, and he is displeased at it ; and the envious man is not only less than the other man’s virtue, but also contrary : the former is a vanity, but this is a vice ; that wants wisdom, but this wants wisdom and charity too ; that supposes an absence of some good, but this is a direct affliction and calamity.

4. And, after all this, if the preacher be not despised, he may proceed cheerfully in doing his duty, and the hearer may have some advantages by every sermon. I remember that Homer says, the wooers of Penelope laughed at Ulysses, because at his return he called for a loaf, and did not, to show his gallantry, call for swords and spears. Ulysses was so wise as to call for that he needed, and had it, and it did him more good than a whole armoury would in his case. So is the plainest part of an easy and honest sermon ; it is the sincere milk of the word, and nourishes a man’s soul, though represented in its own natural simplicity ; and there is hardly any orator but you may find occasion to praise something of him. He speaks pertinently, or he contrives wittily, or he speaks comely, or the man is pious, or charitable, or he hath a good text, or he speaks plainly, or he is not tedious, or, if he be, he is at least industrious, or he is the messenger of God ; and that will not fail us, and let us love him for that. And we know those that love, can easily commend any thing, because they like every thing : and they say fair men are like angels,—and the black are manly,—and the pale look like honey and the stars,—and the crook-nosed are like the sons of kings,—and if they be flat, they are gentle and easy,—and if they be deformed, they are humble, and not to be despised, because they have upon them the impresses of divinity, and they are the sons of God. He that despises his preacher, is a hearer of arts and learning, not of the word of God ; and though, when the word of God, is set off with advantages and entertainments of the better faculties of our humility, it is more useful and of more effect ; yet, when the word of God is spoken truly, though but read in plain language, it will become the disciple of Jesus to love that man whom God sends, and the public order and the laws have employed,—rather than to despise the weakness of him who delivers a mighty word.

Thus it is fit that men should be affected and employed when they hear and read sermons ; coming hither not as into a theatre, where men observe the gestures or noises of the people, the brow and eyes of the most busy censurers, and make parties, and go aside with them that dislike every

thing, or else admire not the things, but the persons ; but as to a sacrifice and as to a school where virtue is taught and exercised, and none come but such as put themselves under discipline, and intend to grow wiser, and more virtuous to appease their passion, from violent to become smooth and even, to have their faith established, and their hope confirmed, and their charity enlarged. They that are otherwise affected, do not do their duty : but if they be so minded as they ought, I and all men in my employment shall be secured against the tongues and faces of men, who are “witty to abuse and undervalue another man’s book.” And yet, besides these spiritual arts already reckoned, I have one security more : for (unless I deceive myself) I intend the glory of God sincerely, and the service of Jesus, in this publication : and therefore, seeing I do not seek myself or my own reputation, I shall not be troubled if they be lost in the voices of busy people, so that I be accepted of God, and found of him in the day of the Lord’s visitation.

THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE GOSPEL AND THE SPIRIT.

THE Gospel is called ‘the Spirit ;’ 1. Because it contains in it such glorious mysteries, which were revealed by the immediate inspirations of the Spirit, not only in the matter itself, but also in the manner and powers to apprehend them. For what power of human understanding could have found out the incarnation of a God ; that two natures [a finite, and an infinite] could have been concentered into one hypostasis (or person) ; that a virgin should be a mother ; that dead men should live again ; that “the ashes of dissolved bones” should become bright as the sun, blessed as the angels, swift in motion as thought, clear as the purest noon ; that God should so love us, as to be willing to be reconciled to us, and yet that himself must die that he might pardon us ; that God’s most holy Son should give us his body to eat, and his blood to crown our chalices, and his Spirit to sanctify our souls, to turn our bodies into temperance, our souls into minds, our minds into spirit, our spirit into glory ; that he, who can give us all things, who is Lord of men and angels, and King of all the creatures, should pray to God for us without intermission ; that he, who reigns over all the world, should, at the day of judgment, “give up the kingdom to God the Father,” and yet, after this resignation, himself and we with him should for ever reign the more gloriously ; that we should be justified by faith in Christ, and that charity should be a part of faith, and that both work as acts of duty, and as acts of relation ; that God should crown the imperfect endeavours of his saints with glory, and that a human act should be rewarded with an eternal inheritance ; that the wicked, for the transient pleasure of a few minutes, should be tormented with an absolute eternity of pains ; that the waters of baptism, when they are hallowed by the Spirit, shall purge the soul from sin ; and that the spirit of man should be nourished with the consecrated and mysterious elements, and that any such nourishment should bring a man up to heaven : and, after all this, that all Christian people, all that will be saved, must be partakers of the divine nature, of the nature, the infinite nature, of God, and must dwell

in Christ, and Christ must dwell in them, and they must be in the Spirit, and the Spirit must be for ever in them? These are articles of so mysterious a philosophy, that we could have inferred them from no premises, discoursed them upon the stock of no natural or scientific principles; nothing but God and God's Spirit could have taught them to us: and therefore the Gospel is "the manifestation of the Spirit," as the apostle calls it, "for edification,"* and building us up to be a holy temple to the Lord.

2. But when we had been taught all these mysterious articles, we could not, by any human power, have understood them, unless the spirit of God had given us a new light, and created in us a new capacity, and made us to be a new creature, of another definition. "The animal, or the natural man," that is as St Jude expounds the word, "the man that hath not the Spirit, cannot discern the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned;"† that is, not to be understood but by the light proceeding from the Sun of Righteousness, and by that eye whose bird is the holy Dove, whose candle is the Gospel.

He that shall discourse Euclid's elements to a swine, or preach (as venerable Bede's story reports of him) to a rock, or talk metaphysics to a boar, will as much prevail upon his assembly, as St Peter and St Paul could do upon uncircumcised hearts and ears, upon the indisposed Greeks and prejudicate Jews. An ox will relish the tender flesh of kids with as much gust and appetite, as an unspiritual and unsanctified man will do the discourses of angels or of an apostle, if he should come to preach the secrets of the Gospel. And we find it true by a sad experience. How many times doth God speak to us by his servants the prophets, by his son, by his apostles, by sermons, by spiritual books, by thousands of homilies, and arts of counsel and insinuation; and we sit as unconcerned as the pillars of a church, and hear the sermons as the Athenians did a story, or as we read a gazette? And if ever it come to pass, that we tremble, as Felix did, when we hear a sad story of death, of "righteousness and judgment to come," then we put it off to another time, or we forget it, and think we had nothing to do but to give the good man a hearing; so our hearers make use of sermons and discourses evangelical but to fill up void spaces of their time, to help to tell an hour with, or pass it without tediousness. The reason of this is a sad condemnation to such persons; they have not yet entertained the Spirit of God, they are in darkness: they were washed in water, but never baptized with the Spirit; "for these things are spiritually discerned." They would think the preacher rude, if he should say,—they are not Christians, they are not within the covenant of the Gospel:—but it is certain, that "the spirit of manifestation" is not yet upon them; and that is the first effect of the Spirit, whereby we can be called sons of God, or relatives of Christ. If we do not apprehend, and greedily suck in, the precepts of this holy discipline, as aptly as merchants do discourse of gain, or farmers of fair harvests, we have nothing but the name of Christians; but we are no more such really, than mandrakes are men, or sponges are living creatures.

3. The Gospel is called 'Spirit,' because it consists of spiritual promises and spiritual precepts, and makes all men that embrace it truly, to be spiritual men; and therefore St Paul adds an epithet beyond this, calling

* 1 Cor. xii. 7.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

it 'a quickening Spirit,'* that is, it puts life into spirits, which the law could not. The law bound us to punishment, but did not help us to obedience, because it gave not the promise of eternal life to its disciples. 'The Spirit,' that is, 'the Gospel,' only does this: and this alone is it which comforts afflicted minds, which puts activeness into wearied spirit, which inflames our cold desires, and blows up sparks into live coals, and coals up to flames, and flames into perpetual burnings. And it is impossible that any man,—who believes and considers the great, the infinite, the unspeakable, the unimaginable, and never-ceasing joys that are prepared for all the sons and daughters of the Gospel,—should not desire them: and, unless he be a fool, he cannot but use means to obtain them, effective, hearty pursuances. For it is not directly in the nature of a man to neglect so great a good; there must be something in his manners, some obliquity in his will, or madness in his intellectuals, or incapacity in his naturals, that must make him sleep such a reward away, or change it for the pleasure of a drunken fever, or the vanity of a mistress, or the rage of a passion, or the unreasonableness of any sin. However, this promise is the life of all our actions, and the Spirit that first taught it, is the life of our souls.

4. But, beyond this, is the reason which is the consummation of all the faithful. The 'Gospel' is called the 'Spirit,' because by and in the Gospel God hath given to us not only 'the Spirit of manifestation,' that is, of instruction and of catechism, of faith and confident assent; but the 'Spirit of confirmation, or obsignation' to all them that believe and obey the Gospel of Christ: that is, the power of God is come upon our hearts, by which, in an admirable manner, we are made sure of a glorious inheritance; made sure (I say) in the nature of the thing; and our own persuasions also are confirmed with an excellent, a comfortable, a discerning, and a reasonable hope: in the strength of which, and by whose aid, as we do not doubt of the performance of the promise, so we vigorously pursue all the parts of the condition, and are enabled to work all the work of God, so as not to be affrighted with fear, or seduced by vanity, or oppressed by lust, or drawn off by evil example, or abused by riches, or imprisoned by ambition and secular designs. This the Spirit of God does work in all his servants; and is called, 'the Spirit of obsignation, or the confirming Spirit,' because it confirms our hope, and assures our title to life eternal; and by means of it, and other its collateral assistances, it also confirms us in our duty, that we may not only profess in word, but live lives according to the Gospel. And this is the sense of "the Spirit" mentioned in the text; "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;" that is, if ye be made partakers of the Gospel, or of 'the Spirit of manifestation;' if ye be truly entitled to God, and have received the promise of the Father, then are ye not carnal men; ye are, spiritual,' ye are 'in the Spirit;' if ye have the Spirit in one sense to any purpose, ye have it also in another: if the Spirit be in you, you are in it; if it hath given you hope, it hath also enabled and ascertained your duty. For 'the Spirit of manifestation' will but upbraid you in the shame and horrors of a sad eternity, if you have not 'the Spirit of obsignation;' if the Holy Ghost be not come upon you to great purposes of holiness, all other pretences are vain,—ye are still in the flesh, which shall never inherit the kingdom of God.

* 1 Cor. xv. 45.

THE CUSTODY OF THE SPIRIT THE BEST FREEDOM.

“IN the Spirit;” that is, in the power of the Spirit. So the Greeks call him in God, ‘who is possessed by a spirit,’ whom God hath filled with a celestial immission; he is said to be in God, when God is in him. And it is a similitude taken from persons encompassed with guards; they are “in custody,” that is, “in their power,” under their command, moved at their dispose; they rest in their time, and receive laws from their authority, and admit visitors whom they appoint, and must be employed as they shall suffer: so are men who are in the Spirit; that is, they believe as he teaches, they work as he enables, they choose what he calls good, they are friends of his friends, and they hate with his hatred: with this only difference, that persons in custody are forced to do what their keepers please, and nothing is free but their wills; but they that are under the command of the Spirit, do all things which the Spirit commands, but they do them cheerfully; and their will is now the prisoner, but it is “free custody,” the will is where it ought to be, and where it desires to be, and it cannot easily choose any thing else, because it is extremely in love with this, as the saints and angels in their state of beatific vision cannot choose but love God; and yet the liberty of their choice is not lessened, because the object fills all the capacities of the will and the understanding. Indifferency to an object is the lowest degree of liberty, and supposes unworthiness or defect in the object, or the apprehension: but the will is then the freest and most perfect in its operation, when it entirely pursues a good with so certain determination and clear election, that the contrary evil cannot come into dispute or pretence. Such in our proportions is the liberty of the sons of God; it is a holy and amiable captivity to the Spirit: the will of man is in love with those chains which draw us to God, and loves the fetters that confine us to the pleasures and religion of the kingdom. And as no man will complain that his temples are restrained, and his head is prisoner, when it is encircled with a crown; so when the Son of God hath made us free, and hath only subjected us to the service and dominion of the Spirit, we are free as princes within the circle of their diadem, and our chains are bracelets, and the law is a law of liberty, and “his service is perfect freedom;” and the more we are subjects, the more “we shall reign as kings;” and the faster we run, the easier is our burden; and Christ’s yoke is like feathers to a bird, not loads, but helps to motion,—without them the body falls; and we do not pity birds, when in summer we wish them unfeathered and callow, or bald as eggs, that they might be cooler and lighter. Such is the load and captivity of the soul, when we do the work of God, and are his servants, and under the government of the Spirit. They that strive to be quit of this subjection, love the liberty of outlaws, and the licentiousness of anarchy, and the freedom of sad widows and distressed orphans; for so rebels, and fools, and children, long to be rid of their princes, and their guardians, and their tutors, that they may be accursed without law, and be undone without control, and be ignorant and miserable without a teacher, and without discipline. He that is in the Spirit, is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father, just as all great heirs are; only, the first seizure the Spirit makes

is upon the will. He that loves the yoke of Christ, and the discipline of the gospel, he is in the Spirit, that is, in the Spirit's power.

INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT

IN WEANING THE HEART FROM WORLDLY PLEASURES.

GOD gave us his Spirit that we might be insensible of worldly pleasures, having our souls wholly filled with spiritual and heavenly relishes. For when God's Spirit hath entered us, and possessed us as his temple, or as his dwelling, instantly we begin to taste manna, and to loathe the diet of Egypt; we begin to consider concerning heaven, and to prefer eternity before moments, and to love the pleasures of the soul above the sottish and beastly pleasures of the body. Then we can consider that the pleasures of a drunken meeting cannot make a recompense for the pains of a surfeit, and that night's intemperance; much less for the torments of eternity: then we are quick to discern that the itch and scab of lustful appetites is not worth the charges of a chirurgeon: much less can it pay for the disgrace, the danger, the sickness, the death, and the hell, of lustful persons. Then we wonder that any man should venture his head to get a crown unjustly; or that, for the hazard of a victory, he should throw away all his hopes of heaven certainly.

A man that hath tasted of God's Spirit, can instantly discern the madness that is in rage, the folly and the disease that are in envy, the anguish and tediousness that are in lust, the dishonour that is in breaking our faith and telling a lie; and understands things truly as they are; that is, that charity is the greatest nobleness in the world; that religion hath in it the greatest pleasures; that temperance is the best security of health; that humility is the surest way to honour. And all these relishes are nothing but antepasts of heaven, where the quintessence of all these pleasures shall be swallowed for ever; where the chaste shall follow the Lamb, and the virgins sing there where the mother of God shall reign; and the zealous converters of souls, and labourers in God's vineyard, shall worship eternally; where St Peter and St Paul do wear their crowns of righteousness; and all patient persons shall be rewarded with Job, and the meek persons with Christ and Moses, and all with God: the very expectation of which,—proceeded from a hope begotten in us by “the Spirit of manifestation,” and bred up and strengthened by “the Spirit of obsignation,”—is so delicious an entertainment of all our reasonable appetites, that a spiritual man can no more be removed or enticed from the love of God and of religion, than the moon from her orb, or a mother from loving the son of her joys and of her sorrows.

This was observed by St Peter; “As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”* When once we have tasted the grace of God, the sweetnesses of his Spirit; then no food but “the food of angels,” no cup but “the cup of salvation,” the “divining cup,” in which

* 1 Pet. ii. 2.

we drink salvation to our God, and call upon the name of the Lord with ravishment and thanksgiving. And there is no greater external testimony that we are in the Spirit, and that the Spirit dwells in us, than if we find joy, and delight, and spiritual pleasure in the greatest mysteries of our religion; if we communicate often, and that with appetite, and a forward choice, and an unwearied devotion, and a heart truly fixed upon God, and upon the offices of a holy worship. He that loathes good meat, is sick at heart, or near it; and he that despises, or hath not a holy appetite to the food of angels, the wine of elect souls, is fit to succeed the prodigal at his banquet of sin and husks, and to be partaker of the table of devils: but all they who have God's Spirit, love to feast at the supper of the Lamb, and have no appetites but what are of the Spirit, or servants to the Spirit. I have read of a spiritual person who saw heaven but in a dream, but such as made great impression upon him, and was represented with vigorous and pertinacious phantasms, not easily disbanding; and when he awaked he knew not his cell, he remembered not him that slept in the same dorter, nor could tell how night and day were distinguished, nor could discern oil from wine; but called out for his vision again: "Give me my fields again, my most delicious fields, my pillar of a glorious light, my companion St Jerome, my assistant angels."—And this lasted till he was told of his duty, and matter of obedience, and the fear of a sin had disencharmed him, and caused him to take care, lest he lose the substance out of greediness to possess the shadow.

And if it were given to any of us to see paradise, or the third heaven, as it was to St Paul, could it be that ever we should love any thing but Christ, or follow any guide but the Spirit, or desire any thing but heaven, or understand any thing to be pleasant but what shall lead thither? Now what a vision can do, that the Spirit doth certainly to them that entertain him. They that have him really, and not in pretence only, are certainly great despisers of the things of the world. The Spirit doth not create or enlarge our appetites of things below: spiritual men are not designed to reign upon earth, but to reign over their lusts and sottish appetites. The Spirit doth not inflame our thirst of wealth, but extinguishes it, and makes us to "esteem all things as loss, and as dung, so that we may gain Christ." No gain then is pleasant but godliness, no ambition but longings after heaven, no revenge but against ourselves for sinning; nothing but God and Christ.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD A SPIRIT OF JOY.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all *joy* and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."* There is a certain joy and spiritual rejoicing, that accompanies them in whom the Holy Ghost doth dwell; a joy in the midst of sorrow: a joy given to allay the sorrows of secular troubles, and to alleviate the burden of persecution. This St Paul notes to this purpose: "And ye became followers of us,

and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."* Worldly afflictions and spiritual joys may very well dwell together; and if God did not supply us out of his storehouses, the sorrow of this world would be more and unmixed, and the troubles of persecution would be too great for natural confidences. For who shall make him recompense that lost his life in a duel, fought about a draught of wine, or a cheaper woman? What arguments shall invite a man to suffer torments in testimony of a proposition of natural philosophy? And by what instruments shall we comfort a man who is sick and poor, and disgraced, and vicious, and lies cursing, and despairs of any thing hereafter? That man's condition proclaims what it is to want the Spirit of God, "the Spirit of comfort." Now this Spirit of comfort is the hope and confidence, the certain expectation of partaking in the inheritance of Jesus; this is the faith and patience of the saints; this is the refreshment of all wearied travellers, the cordial of all languishing sinners, the support of the scrupulous, the guide of the doubtful, the anchor of timorous and fluctuating souls, the confidence and the staff of the penitent. He that is deprived of his whole estate for a good conscience, by the Spirit he meets this comfort, that he shall find it again with advantage in the day of restitution: and this comfort was so manifest in the first days of Christianity, that it was no unfrequent thing to see holy persons court a martyrdom, with a fondness as great as is our impatience and timorousness in every persecution. Till the Spirit of God comes upon us, "we have little souls," little faith, and as little patience; we fall at every stumbling-block, and sink under every temptation; and our hearts fail us, and we die for fear of death, and lose our souls to preserve our estates or our persons, till the Spirit of God "fills us with joy in believing:" and the man that is in a great joy, cares not for any trouble that is less than his joy; and God hath taken so great care to secure this to us, that he hath turned it into a precept, "Rejoice evermore;" and, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."† But this rejoicing must be only in the hope that is laid up for us; so the Apostle, "rejoicing in hope."‡ For although God sometimes makes a cup of sensible comfort to overflow the spirit of a man, and thereby loves to refresh his sorrows; yet this is from a secret principle not regularly given, not to be waited for, not to be prayed for, and it may fail us if we think upon it: but the hope of life eternal can never fail us, and the joy of that is great enough to make us suffer any thing, or to do any thing. To death, to bonds, to poverty, to banishment, to tribunals, any whither in hope of life eternal: as long as this anchor holds, we may suffer a storm, but cannot suffer shipwreck.

MEANS EMPLOYED BY GOD FOR DETERRING MEN FROM SIN.

IT is not necessary that a commonwealth should give pensions to orators, to dissuade men from running into houses infected with the plague, or to entreat them to be out of love with violent torments, or to create in men

* 1 Thes. i. 6.

† 1 Thes. v. 16.

‡ Rom. xii. 12.

evil opinions concerning famine or painful deaths : every man hath a sufficient stock of self-love, upon the strength of which he hath entertained principles strong enough to secure himself against voluntary mischiefs, and from running into states of death and violence. A man would think that this I have now said, were in all cases certainly true ; and I would to God it were : for that which is the greatest evil, that which makes all evils, that which turns good into evil, and every natural evil into a greater sorrow, and makes that sorrow lasting and perpetual ; that which sharpens the edge of swords, and makes agues to be fevers, and fevers to turn into plagues ; that which puts stings into every fly, and uneasiness to every trifling accident, and strings every whip with scorpions,—you know I must needs mean SIN ; that evil men suffer patiently, and choose willingly, and run after it greedily, and will not suffer themselves to be divorced from it : and therefore, God hath hired servants to fight against this evil ; he hath set angels with fiery swords to drive us from it, he hath employed advocates to plead against it, he hath made laws and decrees against it, he hath despatched prophets to warn us of it, and hath established an order of men, men of his own family, and who are fed at his own charges,—I mean the whole order of the clergy, whose office is like watchmen, to give an alarm at every approach of sin, with as much affrightment as if an enemy were near, or the sea broke in upon the flat country ; and all this only to persuade men not to be extremely miserable, for nothing, for vanity, for a trouble, for a disease : for some sins naturally are diseases, and all others are natural nothings, mere privations or imperfections, contrary to goodness, to felicity, to God himself. And yet God hath hedged sin round about with thorns, and sin of itself too brings thorns ; and it abuses a man in all his capacities, and it places poison in all those seats and receptions, where he could possibly entertain happiness : for if sin pretend to please the sense, it doth first abuse it shamefully, and then humours it : it can only feed an imposthum ; no natural, reasonable, and perfective appetite : and besides its own essential appendages and properties, things are so ordered, that a fire is kindled round about us, and every thing within us, above, below us, and on every side of us, is an argument against, and an enemy to sin ; and, for its single pretence, that it comes to please one of the senses, one of those faculties which are in us, the same they are in a cow, it hath an evil so communicative, that it doth not only work like poison, to the dissolution of soul and body, but it is a sickness like the plague, it infects all our houses, and corrupts the air and the very breath of heaven : for it moves God first to jealousy, and that takes off his friendship and kindness towards us ; and then to anger, and that makes him a resolved enemy ; and it brings evil, not only upon ourselves, but upon all our relatives, upon ourselves and our children, even the children of our nephews, “ to children’s children, and to their children,” to the third and fourth generation. And therefore, if a man should despise the eye or sword of man, if he sins, he is to contest with the jealousy of a provoked God : if he doth not regard himself, let him pity his pretty children : if he be angry, and hates all that he sees, and is not solicitous for his children, yet let him pity the generations yet unborn ; let him not bring a curse upon his whole family, and suffer his name to rot in curses and dishonours ; let not his memory remain polluted with an eternal stain. If all this will not deter a man from sin, there is no instrument left for that man’s virtue, no hopes of his felicity, no recovery of his sorrows and

sicknesses ; but he must sink under the strokes of a jealous God into the dishonour of eternal ages, and the groaning of a never-ceasing sorrow.

GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD.

“God is a jealous God.” That is the first and great stroke he strikes against sin, he speaks after the manner of men ; and, in so speaking, we know that he is jealous—is suspicious—he is inquisitive,—he is implacable.

1. God is pleased to represent himself a person very ‘suspicious,’ both in respect of persons and things. For our persons we give him cause enough : for we are sinners from our mother’s womb : we make solemn vows and break them instantly : we cry for pardon, and still renew the sin ; we desire God to try us once more, and we provoke him ten times farther ; we use the means of grace to cure us, and we turn them into vices and opportunities of sin ; we curse our sins, and yet long for them extremely ; we renounce them publicly, and yet send for them in private, and show them kindness ; we leave little offences, but our faith and our charity are not strong enough to master great ones ; and sometimes we are shamed out of great ones, but yet entertain little ones ; or if we disclaim both, yet we love to remember them, and delight in their past actions, and bring them home to us, at least by fiction of imagination, and we love to be betrayed into them : we would fain have things so ordered by chance or power, that it may seem necessary to sin, or that it may become excusable, and dressed fitly for our own circumstances ; and for ever we long after the flesh-pots of Egypt, the garlic and the onions : and we do so little esteem manna, the food of angels, we so loathe the bread of heaven, that any temptation will make us return to our fetters and our bondage. And if we do not tempt ourselves, yet we do not resist a temptation ; or if we pray against it, we desire not to be heard ; and if we be assisted, yet we will not work together with those assistances : so that unless we be forced, nothing will be done. We are so willing to perish, and so unwilling to be saved, that we minister to God reason enough to suspect us, and therefore it is no wonder that God is jealous of us. We keep company with harlots and polluted persons ; we are kind to all God’s enemies, and love that which he hates : how can it be otherwise but that we should be suspected ? Let us make our best of it, and see if we can recover the good opinion of God ; for as yet we are but suspected persons.

2. And therefore God is “inquisitive ;” he looks for that which he fain would never find : God sets spies upon us ; he looks upon us himself through the curtains of a cloud, and he sends angels to espy us in all our ways, and permits the devil to winnow us and to accuse us, and erects a tribunal and witnesses in our own consciences, and he cannot want information concerning our smallest irregularities. Sometimes the devil accuses ; but he sometimes accuses us falsely, either maliciously or ignorantly, and we stand upright in that particular by innocence ; and sometimes by penitence ; and all this while our conscience is our friend. Sometimes our conscience does accuse us unto God ; and then we stand convicted by our own judgment. Sometimes, if our conscience acquit us, yet we are not thereby justified ; for as

Moses accused the Jews, so did Christ and his Apostles accuse us, not in their persons, but by their works and by their words, by the thing itself, by confronting the laws of Christ, and our practices. Sometimes the angels, who are the observers of all our works, carry up sad tidings to the court of heaven against us. Thus two angels were the informers against Sodom : but yet these were the last ; for before that time the cry of their iniquity had sounded loud and sadly in heaven. And all this is the direct and proper effect of his jealousy, which sets spies upon all the actions, and watches the circumstances, and tells the steps, and attends the business, the recreations, the publications, and retirements of every man, and will not suffer a thought to wander, but he uses means to correct its error, and to reduce it to himself. For he that created us, and daily feeds us, he that entreats us to be happy with an importunity so passionate as if not we, but himself were to receive the favour ; he that would part with his only Son from his bosom and the embraces of eternity, and give him over to a shameful and cursed death for us, cannot but be supposed to love us with a great love, and to own us with an entire title, and therefore, that he would fain secure us to himself with an undivided passion. And it cannot but be infinitely reasonable : for to whom else should any of us belong but to God ? Did the world create us ? or did lust ever do us any good ? Did Satan ever suffer one stripe for our advantage ? Does not he study all the ways to ruin us ? Do the sun or the stars preserve us alive ? or do we get understanding from the angels ? Did ever any joint of our body knit, or our heart ever keep one true minute of a pulse, without God ? Had not we been either nothing, or worse, that is, infinitely, eternally miserable, but that God made us capable, and then pursued us with arts and devices of great mercy to force us to be happy ? Great reason therefore their is, that God should be jealous lest we take any of our duty from him, who hath so strangely deserved it all, and give it to a creature, or to our enemy, who cannot be capable of any. But, however, it will concern us with much caution to observe our own ways, since “ we are made a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men.” God hath set so many spies upon us, the blessed angels and the accursed devils, good men and bad men, the eye of heaven, and eye of that eye, God himself,—all watching lest we rob God of his honour, and ourselves of our hopes. For by this prime intention he hath chosen so to get his own glory, as may best consist with our felicity : his great design is to be glorified in our being saved. 3. God’s jealousy hath a sadder effect than all this. For all this is for mercy ; but if we provoke this jealousy, if he finds us in our spiritual whoredoms, he is implacable, that is, he is angry with us to eternity, unless we return in time ; and if we do, it may be, he will not be appeased in all instances ; and when he forgives us, he will make some reserves of his wrath ; he will punish our persons or our estates, he will chastise us at home or abroad, in our bodies or in our children ; for he will visit our sins upon our children from generation to generation : and if they be made miserable for our sins, they are unhappy in such parents ; but we bear the curse and the anger of God, even while they bear his rod. “ God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children.”

SINS OF THE FATHERS VISITED UPON THE CHILDREN.

THAT God doth so is certain, because he saith he doth : and that this is just in him so to do, is also as certain therefore, because he doth it. For as his laws are our measures, so his actions and his own will are his own measures. He that hath right over all things and all persons, cannot do wrong to any thing. He that is essentially just (and there could be no such thing as justice, or justice itself could not be good, if it did not derive from him), it is impossible for him to be unjust. But since God is pleased to speak after the manner of men, it may well consist with our duty to inquire into those matters of consideration, whereby we may understand the equity of God in this proceeding, and to be instructed also in our own danger if we persevere in sin.

When David numbered the people, God was angry with him ; but he punished the people for the crime ; seventy thousand men died of the plague. And when God gave to David the choice of three plagues, he chose that of the pestilence, in which the meanest of the people, and such which have the least society with the acts and crimes of kings, are most commonly devoured ; whilst the powerful and sinning persons, by acts of physic, and flight, by provisions of nature, and accidents, are more commonly secured. But the story of the kings of Israel hath furnished us with an example fitted with all the stranger circumstances in this question. Joshua had sworn to the Gibeonites, who had craftily secured their lives by exchanging it for their liberties : almost five hundred years after, Saul, in zeal to the men of Israel and Judah, slew many of them. After this Saul dies, and no question was made of it : but, in the days of David, there was a famine in the land three years together ; and God, being inquired of, said it was because of Saul's killing the Gibeonites.* What had the people to do with their king's fault ? Or, at least, the people of David with the fault of Saul ? That we shall see anon. But see the way that was appointed to expiate the crime and the calamity. David took seven of Saul's sons, and hung them up against the sun ; and after that, God was entreated for the land. The story observes one circumstance more ; that, for the kindness of Jonathan, David spared Mephibosheth. Now this story doth not only instance in kingdoms, but in families too. The father's fault is punished upon the sons of the family, and the king's fault upon the people of his land ; even after the death of the king, after the death of the father. Thus God visited the sin of Ahab partly upon himself, partly upon his sons : " I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."† Thus did God slay the child of Bathsheba for the sin of his father David : and the whole family of Eli, all his kindred of the nearer lines, were thrust from the priesthood, and a curse made to descend upon his children for many ages, ' that all the males should die young, and in the flower of their youth.' The boldness and impiety of Cham made his posterity to be accursed, and brought slavery into the world. Because Amalek fought with the sons of Israel at Rephidim, God took up a quarrel against the nation for ever. And above all examples is that of the Jews, who put to death the Lord of life, and made their nation to be an

* 2 Sam. xxii. 1.

† 1 Kings. xxi. 29.

anathema for ever, until the day of restitution: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." If we shed innocent blood, if we provoke God to wrath, if we oppress the poor, if we 'crucify the Lord of life again, and put him to an open shame,' the wrath of God will be upon us and upon our children, to make us a cursed family; and we are the sinners, to be the stock and original of the curse; the pedigree of the misery shall derive from us.

This last instance went farther than the other of families and kingdoms. For not only the single families of the Jews were made miserable for their fathers' murdering the Lord of life, nor also was the nation alone extinguished for the sins of their rulers, but the religion was removed; it ceased to be God's people; the synagogue was rejected, and her veil rent, and her privacies dismantled; and the Gentiles were made to be God's people, when the Jews' enclosure was disparted. I need not further to instance this proposition in the case of national churches; though it is a sad calamity that is fallen upon all the seven churches of Asia, to whom the Spirit of God wrote seven epistles by St John; and almost all the churches of Africa, where Christ was worshipped, and now Mahomet is thrust in substitution, and the people are servants, and the religion is extinguished; or, where it remains, it shines like the moon in an eclipse, or like the least spark of the Pleiades, seen but seldom, and that rather shining like a glow-worm than a taper enkindled with a beam of the Sun of Righteousness. I shall add no more instances to verify the truth of this, save only I shall observe to you, that even there is danger in being in evil company, in suspected places, in the civil societies and fellowship of wicked men.—And it happened to the mariners who carried Jonah, to be in danger with a horrid storm, because Jonah was there, who had sinned against the Lord. Many times the sin of one man is punished by the falling of a house or a wall upon him, and then all the family are like to be crushed with the same ruin: so dangerous, so pestilential, so infectious a thing is sin, that it scatters the poison of its breath to all the neighbourhood, and makes that the man ought to be avoided like a person infected with a plague.

Next I am to consider, why this is so, and why it is justly so. To this I answer, 1. Between kings and their people, parents and their children, there is so great a necessity, propriety, and intercourse of nature, dominion, right, and possession, that they are by God and the laws of nations reckoned as their goods and their blessings. "The honour of a king is in the multitude of his people;" and, "Children are a gift that cometh of the Lord;" and, "Happy is that man that hath his quiver full of them;" and, "Lo thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord; his wife shall be like the fruitful vine by the walls of his house, his children like olive branches round about his table."—Now, if children be a blessing, then to take them away in anger is a curse: and if the loss of flocks and herds, the burning of houses, the blasting of fields, be a curse; how much greater is it to lose our children, and to see God slay them before our eyes, in hatred to our persons, and detestation and loathing of our baseness? When Job's messengers told him the sad stories of fire from heaven, the burning his sheep, and that the Sabeans had driven his oxen away, and the Chaldeans had stolen his camels; these were sad arrests to his troubled spirit: but it was reserved as the last blow of that sad execution, that the ruins of a house had crushed his sons and daughters to their graves. Sons

and daughters are greater blessings than sheep and oxen : they are not servants of profit, as sheep are, but they secure greater ends of blessing ; they preserve your names ; they are so many titles of provision and providence ; every new child is a new title of God's care of that family : they serve the ends of honour, of commonwealths and kingdoms ; they are images of our souls, and images of God, and therefore are great blessings ; and, by consequence, they are great riches, though they are not to be sold for money : and surely he that hath a cabinet of invaluable jewels, will think himself rich, though he never sells them. " Does God take care for oxen ? " said our blessed Saviour : much more for you : yea, all and every one of your children are of more value than many oxen. When therefore God, for your sins, strikes them with crookedness, with deformity, with foolishness, with impertinent and caitiff spirits, with hasty or sudden deaths ; it is a greater curse to you than to lose whole herds of cattle, of which, it is certain, most men would be very sensible. They are our goods ; they are our blessings from God ; therefore we are stricken when for our sakes they die. Therefore, we may properly be punished by evils happening to our relatives.

2. But as this is a punishment to us, so it is not unjust as to them, though they be innocent. For all the calamities of this life are incident to the most godly persons in the world : and since the King of heaven and earth was made a man of sorrows, it cannot be called unjust or intolerable, that innocent persons should be pressed with temporal infelicities ; only in such cases we must distinguish the misery from the punishment : for that all the world dies is a punishment of Adam's sin ; but it is no evil to those single persons that " die in the Lord," for they are blessed in their death. Jonathan was killed the same day with his father the king ; and this was a punishment to Saul indeed, but to Jonathan it was a blessing : for since God had appointed the kingdom to his neighbour, it was more honourable for him to die fighting the Lord's battle, than to live and see himself the lasting testimony of God's curse upon his father, who lost the kingdom from his family by his obedience. That death is a blessing, which ends an honourable and prevents an inglorious life. And our children, it may be, shall be sanctified by a sorrow, and purified by the power of affliction, and they shall receive the blessing of it ; but it is to the fathers a curse, who shall wound their own hearts with sorrow, and cover their heads with a robe of shame, for bringing so great an evil upon their house.

3. God hath many ends of providence to serve in this dispensation of his judgments. 1. He expresses the highest indignation against sin, and makes his examples lasting, communicative, and of great effect ; it is a little image of hell ; and we shall the less wonder that God with the pains of eternity punishes the sins of time, when with our eyes we see him punish a transient action with a lasting judgment. 2. It arrests the spirits of men, and surprises their loosenesses, and restrains their gayety, when we observe that the judgments of God find us out in all relations, and turn our comforts into sadness, and make our families the scene of sorrows, and we can escape him nowhere : and by sin are made obnoxious not alone to personal judgments, but are made like the fountains of the Dead Sea, springs of the lake of Sodom ; instead of refreshing our families with blessings, we leave them brimstone and drought, and poison, and an evil name, and the wrath of God, and a treasure of wrath, and their fathers' sins for

their portion and inheritance. Naturalists say, that when the leading goats in the Greek islands have taken an 'eryngus,' or sea holly, into their mouths, all the herd will stand still, till the herdsman comes and forces it out, as apprehending the evil that will come to them all, if any of them, especially their principals, taste an unwholesome plant. And, indeed, it is of a general concernment, that the master of a family, or the prince of a people, from whom, as from a fountain, many issues do derive upon their relatives, should be springs of health, and sanctity, and blessing. It is a great right and propriety that a king hath in his people, or a father in his children, that even their sins can do these a mischief, not only by a direct violence, but by the execution of God's wrath. God hath made strange bands and vessels, or channels of communication between them, when even the anger of God shall be conveyed by the conduits of such relations. That would be considered. It binds them nearer than our new doctrine will endure. But it also binds us to pray for them, and for their holiness, and good government, as earnestly as we would to be delivered from death, or sickness, or poverty, or war, or the wrath of God in any instance.

3. This also will satisfy the fearfulness of such persons, who think the evil prosperous, and call the proud happy. No man can be called happy till he be dead ; nor then neither, if he lived viciously. Look how God handles him in his children, in his family, in his grand-children : and as it tells that generation, which sees the judgment, that God was all the while angry with him ; so it supports the spirits of men in the interval, and entertains them with the expectation of a certain hope : for if I do not live to see his sin punished, yet his posterity may find themselves accursed, and feel their fathers' sins in their own calamity ; and the expectation or belief of that may relieve my oppression, and ease my sorrows, while I know that God will bear my injury in a lasting record, and, when I have forgot it, will bring it forth to judgment. The Athenians were highly pleased when they saw honours done to the posterity of Cimon, a good man and a rare citizen, but murdered for being wise and virtuous ; and when at the same time they saw a decree of banishment pass against the children of Lacharis and Aristo, they laid their hands upon their mouths, and with silence did admire the justice of the Power above.

The sum of this is : that, in sending evils upon the posterity of evil men, God serves many ends of providence, some of wisdom, some of mercy, some of justice, and contradicts none. For the evil of the innocent son is the father's punishment upon the stock of his sin, and his relation ; but the sad accident happens to the son, upon the score of nature, and many ends of providence and mercy. To which I add, that if any, even the greatest temporal evil, may fall upon a man, as blindness did upon the blind man in the gospel, when "neither he nor his parents have sinned ;" much more may it do so, when his parents have, though he have not. For there is a nearer or more visible commensuration of justice between the parent's sin and the son's sickness, than between the evil of the son and the innocence of the father and son together. The dispensation therefore is righteous and severe.

GOD GLORIFIED BY THE SINNER'S REPENTANCE.

GOD is the eternal fountain of honour and the spring of glory ; in him it dwells essentially, from him it derives originally ; and when an action is glorious, or a man is honourable, it is because the action is pleasing to God, in the relation of obedience or imitation, and because the man is honoured by God, and by God's vicegerent : and therefore, God cannot be dishonoured, because all honour comes from himself ; he cannot but be glorified, because to be himself is to be infinitely glorious. And yet he is pleased to say, that our sins dishonour him, and our obedience does glorify him. But as the sun, the great eye of the world, prying into the recesses of rocks and the hollowness of valleys, receives species or visible forms from these objects, but he beholds them only by that light which proceeds from himself : so does God, who is the light of that eye ; he receives reflexes and returns from us, and these he calls " glorifications " of himself, but they are such which are made so by his own gracious acceptance. For God cannot be glorified by any thing but by himself, and by his own instruments, which he makes as mirrors to reflect his own excellency ; that by seeing the glory of such emanations, he may rejoice in his own works, because they are images of his infinity. Thus, when he made the beautiful frame of heaven and earth, he rejoiced in it, and glorified himself ; because it was the glass in which he beheld his wisdom and almighty power. And when God destroyed the old world, in that also he glorified himself ; for in those waters he saw the image of his justice,—they were the looking-glass for that attribute ; and God is said " to laugh at and rejoice in the destruction of a sinner," because he is pleased with the economy of his own laws, and the excellent proportions he hath made of his judgments consequent to our sins. But, above all, God rejoiced in his holy Son ; for he was the image of the Divinity, " the character and express image of his person ; " in him he beheld his own essence, his wisdom, his power, his justice, and his person ; and he was that excellent instrument designed from eternal ages to represent, as in a double mirror, not only the glories of God to himself, but also to all the world ; and he glorified God by the instrument of obedience, in which God beheld his own dominion and the sanctity of his laws clearly represented ; and he saw his justice glorified, when it was fully satisfied by the passion of his Son : and so he hath transmitted to us a great manner of the divine glorification, being become to us the author and example of giving glory to God after the manner of men, that is, by well-doing and patient suffering, by obeying his laws, and submitting to his power, by imitating his holiness and confessing his goodness, by remaining innocent or becoming penitent ; for this also is called in the text " giving glory to the Lord our God."

For he that hath dishonoured God by sins, that is, hath denied, by a moral instrument of duty and subordination, to confess the glories of his power, and the goodness of his laws, and hath dishonoured and despised his mercy, which God intended as an instrument of our piety, hath no better way to glorify God, than by returning to his duty, to advance the honour of the divine attributes, in which he is pleased to communicate himself, and to have intercourse

with man. He that repents, confesses his own error, and the righteousness of God's laws,—and by judging himself confesses that he deserves punishment,—and therefore, that God is righteous if he punishes him : and, by returning, confesses God to be the fountain of felicity, and the foundation of true, solid, and permanent joys, saying in the sense and passion of the disciples, “ Whither shall I go ? for thou hast the words of eternal life : ” and, by humbling himself, exalts God, by making the proportion of distance more immense and vast. And as repentance does contain in it all the parts of holy life, which can be performed by a returning sinner (all the acts and habits of virtue being but parts, or instances, or effects of repentance) : so all the actions of a holy life do constitute the mass and body of all those instruments, whereby God is pleased to glorify himself. For if God is glorified in the sun and moon, in the rare fabric of the honeycombs, in the discipline of bees, in the economy of pismires, in the little houses of birds, in the curiosity of an eye, God being pleased to delight in those little images and reflexes of himself from those pretty mirrors, which, like a crevice in the wall, through a narrow perspective, transmit the species of a vast excellency : much rather shall God be pleased to behold himself in the glasses of our obedience, in the emissions of our will and understanding ; these being rational and apt instruments to express him, far better than the natural, as being nearer communications of himself.

THE VANITY OF EARTHLY CONFIDENCES.

FOLLY and subtilty divide the greatest part of mankind ; and there is no other difference but this ; that some are crafty enough to deceive, others foolish enough to be cozened and abused : and yet the scales also turn ; for they that are the most crafty to cozen others, are the veriest fools, and most of all abused themselves. They rob their neighbour of his money, and lose their own innocence ; they disturb his rest, and vex their own conscience ; they throw him into prison, and themselves into hell ; they make poverty to be their brother's portion, and damnation to be their own. Man entered into the world first alone ; but as soon as he met with one companion, he met with three to cozen him : the serpent, and Eve, and himself, all joined,—first to make him a fool, and to deceive him, and then to make him miserable. But he first cozened himself, “ giving himself up to believe a lie ; ” and, being desirous to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, he sinned before he fell ; that is, he had within him a false understanding, and a depraved will : and these were the parents of his disobedience, and this was the parent of his infelicity, and a great occasion of ours. And then it was that he entered, for himself and his posterity, into the condition of an ignorant, credulous, easy, wilful, passionate, and impotent person ; apt to be abused, and so loving to have it so, that if nobody else will abuse him, he will be sure to abuse himself ; by ignorance and evil principles being open to an enemy, and by wilfulness and sensuality doing to himself the most unpardonable injuries in the whole world. So

that the condition of man, in the rudeness and first lines of its visage, seems very miserable, deformed, and accursed.

For a man is helpless and vain ; of a condition so exposed to calamity, that a raisin is able to kill him ; any trooper out of the Egyptian army, a fly can do it, when it goes on God's errand ; the most contemptible accident can destroy him, the smallest chance affright him, every future contingency, when but considered as possible, can amaze him ; and he is encompassed with potent and malicious enemies, subtle and implacable : what shall this poor helpless thing do ? 'Trust in God ? him he hath offended, and he fears him as an enemy ; and, God knows, if we look only on ourselves, and on our own demerits, we have too much reason so to do. Shall he rely upon princes ? God help poor kings ; they rely upon their subjects, they fight with their swords, levy force with their money, consult with their counsels, hear with their ears, and are strong only in their union, and many times they use all these things against them ; but, however, they can do nothing without them while they live, and yet if ever they can die, they are not to be trusted to. Now kings and princes die so sadly and notoriously, that it was used for a proverb in holy Scripture, "Ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." Whom then shall we trust in ? In our friend ? Poor man ! he may help thee in one thing, and need thee in ten : he may pull thee out of the ditch, and his foot may slip and fall into it himself : he gives thee counsel to choose a wife, and himself is to seek how prudently to choose his religion ; he counsels thee to abstain from a duel, and yet slays his own soul with drinking : like a person void of all understanding, he is willing enough to preserve thy interest, and is very careless of his own ; for he does highly despise to betray or to be false to thee, and in the mean time is not his own friend, and is false to God ; and then his friendship may be useful to thee in some circumstances of fortune, but no security to thy condition. But what then ? shall we rely upon our patron, like the Roman clients, who waited hourly upon their persons, and daily upon their baskets, and nightly upon their lusts, and married their friendships, and contracted also their hatred and quarrels ? this is a confidence will deceive us. For they may lay us by, justly or unjustly ; they may grow weary of doing benefits, or their fortunes may change ; or they may be charitable in their gifts, and burdensome in their offices ; able to feed you, but unable to council you ; or your need may be longer than their kindnesses, or such in which they can give you no assistance : and, indeed, generally it is so, in all the instances of men. We have a friend that is wise ; but I need not his counsel, but his meat : or my patron is bountiful in his largesses ; but I am troubled with a sad spirit ; and money and presents do me no more ease than perfumes do to a broken arm. We seek life of a physician that dies, and go to him for health, who cannot cure his own breath or gout ; and so become vain in our imaginations, abused in our hopes, restless in our passions, impatient in our calamity, unsupported in our need, exposed to enemies, wandering and wild, without council and without remedy. At last, after the infatuating and deceiving all our confidences without, we have nothing left us but to return home, and dwell within ourselves : for we have a sufficient stock of self-love, that we may be confident of our own affections, we may trust ourselves surely ; for what we want in skill we shall make up in diligence, and our industry shall supply the want of

other circumstances : and no man understands my own case so well as I do myself, and no man will judge so faithfully as I shall do for myself ; for I am most concerned not to abuse myself ; and if I do, I shall be the loser, and therefore may best rely upon myself. Alas ! and God help us ! we shall find it to be no such matter : for we neither love ourselves well, nor understand our own case ; we are partial in our own questions, deceived in our sentences, careless of our interests, and the most false, perfidious creatures to ourselves in the whole world : even the “ heart of a man,” a man’s own heart, “ is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? ” and who can choose but know it ?

THE WEAKNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART.

THE heart is deceitful in its strength ; and when we have the growth of a man, we have the weaknesses of a child : nay, more yet, and it is a sad consideration, the more we are in age, the weaker in our courage. It appears in the heats and forwardnesses of new converts, which are like to the great emissions of lightning, or like huge fires, which flame and burn without measure, even all that they can ; till from flames they descend to still fires, from thence to smoke, from smoke to embers, and from thence to ashes ; cold and pale, like ghosts, or the fantastic images of death. And the primitive church were zealous in their religion up to the degree of cherubims, and would run as greedily to the sword of the hangman, to die for the cause of God, as we do now to the greatest joy and entertainment of a Christian spirit,—even to the receiving of the holy sacrament. A man would think it reasonable, that the first infancy of Christianity should, according to the nature of first beginnings, have been remiss, gentle, and inactive ; and that, according as the object or evidence of faith grew, which in every age hath a great degree of argument superadded to its confirmation, so should the habit also and the grace ; the longer it lasts, and the more objections it runs through, it still should show a brighter and more certain light to discover the divinity of its principle ; and that after the more examples, and new accidents and strangenesses of providence, and daily experience, and the multitude of miracles, still the Christian should grow more certain in his faith, more refreshed in his hope, and warm in his charity ; the very nature of these graces increasing and swelling upon the very nourishment of experience, and the multiplication of their own acts. And yet, because the heart of man is false, it suffers the fires of the altar to go out, and the flames lessen by the multitude of fuel. But, indeed, it is because we put on strange fire, and put out the fire upon our hearths by letting in a glaring sunbeam, the fire of lust, or the heats of an angry spirit, to quench the fire of God, and suppress the sweet cloud of incense. The heart of man hath not strength enough to think one good thought of itself ; it cannot command its own attentions to a prayer of ten lines long, but, before its end, it shall wander after something that is to no purpose ; and no wonder, then, that it grows weary of a holy religion, which consists of so many parts as make the business of a whole life. And there is no greater argument in the world of our spiritual

weakness, and the falseness of our hearts in the matters of religion, than the backwardness which most men have always, and all men have sometimes, to say their prayers; so weary of their length, so glad when they are done, so witty to excuse and frustrate an opportunity: and yet there is no manner of trouble in the duty, no weariness of bones, no violent labours; nothing but begging a blessing, and receiving it; nothing but doing ourselves the greatest honour of speaking to the greatest person, and greatest king of the world: and, that we should be unwilling to do this, so unable to continue in it, so backward to return to it, so without gust and relish in the doing it, can have no visible reason in the nature of the thing, but something within us, a strange sickness in the heart, a spiritual nauseating or loathing of manna, something that hath no name; but we are sure it comes from a weak, a faint, and false heart.

And yet this weak heart is strong in passions, violent in desires, irresistible in its appetites, impatient in its lust, furious in anger: here are strengths enough, one should think. But so have I seen a man in a fever sick and distempered, unable to walk, less able to speak sense, or to do an act of counsel; and yet, when his fever had boiled up to a delirium, he was strong enough to beat his nursekeeper and his doctor too, and to resist the loving violence of all his friends, who would fain bind him down to reason and his bed: and yet we still say, he is weak, and sick to death. For these strengths of madness are not health, but furiousness and disease. And so are the strengths of a man's heart: they are fetters and manacles; strong, but they are the cordage of imprisonment; so strong, that the heart is not able to stir. And yet it cannot but be a huge sadness, that the heart shall pursue a temporal interest with wit and diligence, and an unwearied industry; and shall not have strength enough, in a matter that concerns its eternal interest, to answer one objection, to resist one assault, to defeat one art of the devil; but shall certainly and infallibly fall, whenever it is tempted to a pleasure.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART IN JUDGING ITS OWN SPIRITUAL STATE.

THE heart of man is deceitful in making judgment concerning its own acts. It does not know when it is pleased or displeased; it is peevish and trifling; it would, and it would not; and it is in many cases impossible to know whether a man's heart desires such a thing or not. St Ambrose hath an odd saying, "It is easier to find a man that lived innocently, than one that hath truly repented him," with a grief and care great according to the merit of his sins. Now, suppose a man that hath spent his younger years in vanity and folly, and is by the grace of God apprehensive of it, and thinks of returning to sober counsels; this man will find his heart so false, so subtle and fugitive, so secret and undiscernible, that it will be very hard to discern whether he repents or no. For if he considers that he hates sin, and therefore repents; alas! he so hates it, that he dares not, if he be wise, tempt himself with an opportunity to act it: for in the midst of that

which he calls hatred, he hath so much love left for it, that if the sin comes again and speaks him fair, he is lost again, he kisses the fire, and dies in its embraces. And why else should it be necessary for us to pray, that "we be not led into temptation," but because we hate the sin, and yet love it too well; we curse it, and yet follow it; we are angry at ourselves, and yet cannot be without it; we know it undoes us, but we think it pleasant. And when we are to execute the fierce anger of the Lord upon our sins, yet we are kind-hearted, and spare the Agag, the reigning sin, the splendid temptation; we have some kindnesses left towards it.

These are but ill signs. How then shall I know, by some infallible token, that I am a true penitent? What and if I weep for my sins? will you not then give me leave to conclude my heart right with God, and at enmity with sin? It may be so. But there are some friends that weep at parting; and is not thy weeping a sorrow of affection? It is a sad thing to part with our long companion. Or, it may be thou weepest, because thou wouldest have a sign to cozen thyself withal: for some men are more desirous to have a sign, than the thing signified; they would do something to show their repentance, that themselves may believe themselves to be penitents, having no reason from within to believe so. And I have seen some persons weep heartily for the loss of a sixpence, or for the breaking of a glass, or at some trifling accident; and they that do so, cannot pretend to have their tears valued at a bigger rate than they will confess their passion to be, when they weep; they are vexed for the dirtying of their linen, or some such trifle, for which, the least passion is too big an expense. So that a man cannot tell his own heart by his tears, or the truth of his repentance by those short gusts of sorrow. How then? Shall we suppose a man to pray against his sin? So did St Austin; when, in his youth, he was tempted to lust and uncleanness, he prayed against it, and secretly desired that God would not hear him: for here the heart is cunning to deceive itself. For, no man did ever heartily pray against his sin in the midst of a temptation to it, if he did in any sense or degree listen to the temptation: for to pray against a sin, is to have desires contrary to it, and that cannot consist with any love or kindness to it. We pray against it, and yet do it; and then pray again, and do it again: and we desire it, and yet pray against the desires; and that is almost a contradiction. Now, because no man can be supposed to will against his own will, or choose against his own desires; it is plain, that we cannot know whether we mean what we say when we pray against sin, but by the event: if we never act it, never entertain it, always resist it, ever fight against it, and finally do prevail; then, at length, we may judge our own heart to have meant honestly in that one particular.

Nay, our heart is so deceitful in this matter of repentance, that the masters of spiritual life are vain to invent suppletory arts and stratagems to secure the duty. And we are advised to mourn, because we do not mourn: to be sorrowful, because we are not sorrowful. Now, if we be sorrowful in the first stage, how happens it that we know it not? Is our heart so secret to ourselves? But if we be not sorrowful in the first period, how shall we be so, or know it, in the second period? For we may as well doubt concerning the sincerity of the second, or reflex act of sorrow, as of the first and direct action. And, therefore, we may also as well be sorrowful the third time, for want of the just measure or hearty meaning of

the second sorrow, as he sorrowful the second time, for want of true sorrow at the first ; and so on to infinity. And we shall never be secure in this artifice, if we be not certain of our natural and hearty passion in our direct and first apprehensions.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART

IN RESPECT OF ITS PURPOSES AND RESOLUTIONS.

THE heart is deceitful in its own resolutions and purposes : for many times men make their resolutions only in their understanding, not in their will ; they resolve it fitting to be done, not decree that they will do it ; and instead of beginning to be reconciled to God by the renewed and hearty purposes of holy living, they are advanced so far only as to be convinced, and apt to be condemned by their own sentence.

But suppose our resolutions advanced farther, and that our will and choices also are determined ; see how our hearts deceive us.

1. We resolve against those sins that please us not, or where temptation is not present, and think, by an over-acted zeal against some sins, to give an indulgence for some others. There are some persons who will be drunk ; the company, or the discourse, or the pleasure of madness, or an easy nature and a thirsty soul, something is amiss, that cannot be helped : but they will make amends, and the next day pray twice as much. Or, it may be, they must satisfy a beastly lust ; but they will not be drunk for all the world ; and hope, by their temperance, to commute for their want of chastity. But they attend not to the craft of their secret enemy, their heart : for it is not love of the virtue ; if it were, they would love virtue in all its instances ; for chastity is as much a virtue as temperance, and God hates lust as much as he hates drunkenness. But this sin is against my health, or, it may be, it is against my lust ; it makes me impotent, and yet impatient ; full of desire, and empty of strength. Or else I do an act of prayer, lest my conscience become unquiet, while it is not satisfied, or cozened with some intervals of religion : I shall think myself a damned wretch if I do nothing for my soul ; but if I do, I shall call the one sin that remains, nothing but my infirmity ; and therefore it is my excuse : and my prayer is not my religion, but my peace, and my pretence, and my fallacy.

2. We resolve against our sin, that is, we will not act it in those circumstances as formerly. I will not be drunk in the streets ; but I may sleep till I be recovered, and then come forth sober : or, if I be overtaken, it shall be in civil and genteel company. Or it may be not so much ; I will leave my intemperance and my lust too, but I will remember it with pleasure ; I will revolve the past action in my mind, and entertain my fancy with a morose delectation in it, and, by a fiction of imagination, will represent it present, and so be satisfied with a little effeminacy or fantastic pleasure. Beloved, suffer not your hearts so to cozen you ; as if any man can be faithful in much that is faithless in a little. He certainly is very much in love with sin, and parts with it very unwillingly, that keeps its picture, and wears its favour, and delights in the fancy of it, even with

the same desire as a most passionate widow parts with her dearest husband, even when she can no longer enjoy him : but certainly her staring all day upon his picture, and weeping over his robe, and wringing her hands over his children, are no great signs that she hated him. And just so do most men hate, and accordingly part with, their sins.

3. We resolve against it when the opportunity is slipped, and lay it aside as long as the temptation pleases, even till it come again, and no longer. How many men are there in the world, that against every communion renew their vows of holy living ? men that for twenty, for thirty years together, have been perpetually resolving against what they daily act ; and sure enough they did believe themselves. And yet if a man had daily promised us a courtesy, and failed us but ten times, when it was in his power to have done it,—we should think we had reason never to believe him more. And can we then reasonably believe the resolutions of our hearts, which they have falsified so many hundred times ? We resolve against a religious time, because then it is the custom of men, and the guise of the religion : or we resolve when we are in a great danger ; and then we promise any thing, possible or impossible, likely or unlikely, all is one to us ; we only care to remove the present pressure ; and when that is over, and our fear is gone, and no love remaining, our condition being returned to our first securities, our resolutions also revert to their first indifferences : or else we cannot look a temptation in the face, and we resolve against it, hoping never to be troubled with its arguments and importunity. Epictetus tells us of a gentleman returning from banishment, who, in his journey towards home, called at his house, told a sad story of an imprudent life, the greatest part of which being now spent, he was resolved for the future to live philosophically, and entertain no business, to be candidate for no employment, not to go to the court, not to salute Cæsar with ambitious attendances, but to study, and worship the gods, and die willingly, when nature or necessity called him. It may be, this man believed himself, but Epictetus did not. And he had reason : for “ letters from Cæsar met him ” at the doors, and invited him to court ; and he forgot all his promises, which were warm upon his lips ; and grew pompous, secular, and ambitious, and gave the gods thanks for his preferment. Thus many men leave the world, when their fortune hath left them ; and they are severe and philosophical, and retired for ever ; if for ever it be impossible to return : but let a prosperous sunshine warm and refresh their sadnesses, and make it but possible to break their purposes, and there needs no more temptation ; their own false heart is enough ; they are like “ Ephraim in the day of battle, starting aside like a broken bow.”

4. The heart is false, deceiving and deceived, in its intentions and designs. A man hears the precepts of God enjoining us to give alms of all we possess ; he readily obeys with much cheerfulness and alacrity, and his charity, like a fair spreading tree, looks beautifully : but there is a canker at the heart ; the man blows a trumpet to call the poor together, and hopes the neighbourhood will take notice of his bounty. Nay, he gives alms privately, and charges no man to speak of it, and yet hopes by some accident or other to be praised both for his charity and humility. And if, by chance, the fame of his alms come abroad, it is but his duty to “ let his light so shine before men,” that God may be “ glorified,” and some of our neighbours be relieved, and others edified. But then, to distinguish the

intention of our heart in this instance, and to seek God's glory in a particular, which will also conduce much to our reputation, and to have no filthy adherence to stick to the heart, no reflection upon ourselves, or no complacency and delight in popular noises,—is the nicety of abstraction, and requires an angel to do it. Some men are so kind-hearted, so true to their friend, that they will watch his very dying groans, and receive his last breath, and close his eyes. And if this be done with honest intention, it is well: but there are some that do so, and yet are vultures and harpies; they watch for the carcass, and prey upon a legacy. A man with a true story may be malicious to his enemy, and by doing himself right may also do him wrong: and so false is the heart of man, so clancular and contradictory are its actions and intentions, that some men pursue virtue with great earnestness, and yet cannot with patience look upon it in another: it is beauty in themselves, and deformity in the other. Is it not plain, that not the virtue, but its reputation, is the thing that is pursued? And yet, if you tell the man so, he thinks he hath reason to complain of your malice or detraction. Who is able to distinguish his fear of God, from fear of punishment, when, from fear of punishment, we are brought to fear God? And yet the difference must be distinguishable in new converts and old disciples; and our fear of punishment must so often change its circumstances, that it must be at last a fear to offend out of pure love, and must have no formality left to distinguish it from charity. It is easy to distinguish these things in precepts, and to make the separation in the schools; the head can do it easily, and the tongue can do it: but when the heart comes to separate alms from charity, God's glory from human praise, fear from fear, and sincerity from hypocrisy; it does so intricate the questions, and confound the ends, and blend and entangle the circumstances, that a man hath reason to doubt that his very best actions are sullied with some unhandsome excrescency, something to make them very often to be criminal, but always to be imperfect.

Here, a man would think, were enough to abate our confidence, and the spirit of pride, and to make a man eternally to stand upon his guard, and to keep a strict watch upon his own heart, as upon his greatest enemy from without. It was St Austin's prayer; "Lord, keep me, Lord, deliver me from myself." If God will keep a man that he "lay no violent hands upon himself," it is certain nothing else can do him mischief. The devil can but tempt, and offer a dagger at the heart; unless our hands thrust it home, the devil can do nothing, but what may turn to our advantage. And in this sense we are to understand the two seeming contradictories in Scripture: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation," said our blessed Saviour; and, "Count it all joy when you enter into divers temptations," said one of Christ's disciples. The case is easy. When God suffers us to be tempted, he means it but as a trial of our faith, as the exercise of our virtues, as the opportunity of reward; and in such cases we have reason to count it all joy; since the "trial of our faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience causeth hope, and hope maketh not ashamed:" but yet, for all this, "pray against temptations:" for when we get them into our hands, we use them as blind men do their clubs, neither distinguish person nor part: they strike the face of their friends as soon as the back of the enemy; our hearts betray us to the enemy, we fall in love with our mischief, we contrive how

to let the lust in, and leave a port open on purpose, and use arts to forget our duty, and give advantages to the devil. He that uses a temptation thus, hath reason to pray against it; and yet our hearts do all this and a thousand times more.

There is so much falseness and iniquity in man's heart, that it defiles all the members; it makes the eyes lustful, and the tongue slanderous; it fills the head with mischief, and the feet with blood, and the hands with injury, and the present condition of man with folly, and makes his future state apt to inherit eternal misery. But this is but the beginning of those throes and damnable impieties which proceed out of the heart of man, and defile the whole constitution. I have yet told but the weaknesses of the heart; I shall the next time tell you the iniquities, those inherent devils which pollute and defile it to the ground, and make it "desperately wicked," that is, wicked beyond all expression.

THE VOLUNTARY BLINDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART.

OUR hearts are blind, wilfully blind. I need not instance in the ignorance and involuntary nescience of men; though if we speak of the necessary parts of religion, no man is ignorant of them without his own fault: such ignorance is always a direct sin, or the direct punishment of a sin: a sin is either in its bosom, or in its retinue. But the ignorance that I now intend, is a voluntary, chosen, delightful ignorance, taken in upon design, even for no other end, but that we may perish quietly and infallibly. God hath opened all the windows of heaven, and sent the Sun of Righteousness with glorious apparition, and hath discovered the abysses of his own wisdom, made the second person in the Trinity to be the doctor and preacher of his sentences and secrets, and the third person to be his amanuensis or scribe, and our hearts to be the book in which the doctrine is written, and miracles and prophecies to be its arguments, and all the world to be the verification of it: and those leaves contain within their folds all that excellent morality, which right reason picked up after the shipwreck of nature, and all those wise sayings which singly made so many men famous for preaching some one of them; all them Christ gathered, and added some more out of the immediate book of revelation. So that now the wisdom of God hath made every man's heart to be the true vetonica, in which he hath imprinted his own lineaments so perfectly, that we may dress ourselves like God, and have the air and features of Christ our elder brother; that we may be pure as God is, perfect as our Father, meek and humble as the Son, and may have the Holy Ghost within us, in gifts and graces, in wisdom and holiness. This hath God done for us; and see what we do for him. We stand in our own light, and quench God's; we love darkness more than light, and entertain ourselves accordingly. For how many of us are there, that understand nothing of the ways of God; that know no more of the laws of Jesus Christ than is remaining upon them since they learned the children's catechism? But, amongst a thousand, how many can explicate and unfold for his own practice the ten commandments, and how many sorts of sins are there forbidden? which therefore pass into

action, and never pass under the scrutinies of repentance, because they know not that they are sins? Are there not very many, who know not the particular duties of "meekness," and never consider concerning "long-suffering?" and if you talk to them of growth in grace, or the Spirit of obsignation, or the melancholic lectures of the cross, and imitation of, and conformity to, Christ's sufferings, or adherences to God, or rejoicing in him, or not quenching the Spirit; you are too deep-learned for them. And yet these are duties set down plainly for our practice, necessary to be acted in order to our salvation.

But, that I may be more particular; the heart of man uses devices that it may be ignorant.

1. We are impatient of honest and severe reproof; and order the circumstances of our persons and addresses, that we shall never come to the true knowledge of our condition. Who will endure to hear his curate tell him, that he is covetous, or that he is proud? It is calumny and reviling if he speak it to his head, and relates to his person: and yet if he speak only in general, every man neglects what is not recommended to his particular. But yet, if our physician tell us, You look well, sir, but a fever lurks in your spirits; "Drink juleps, and abstain from flesh;"—no man thinks it shame or calumny to be told so: but when we are told that our liver is inflamed with lust or anger, that our heart is vexed with envy, that our eyes roll with wantonness; and though we think all is well, yet we are sick, sick unto death, and near to a sad and fatal sentence; we shall think that man that tells us so, is impudent or uncharitable; and yet he hath done him no more injury than a deformed man receives daily from his looking-glass, which if he shall dash against the wall, because it shows him his face just as it is, his face is not so ugly as his manners. And yet our heart is so impatient of seeing its own stains, that, like the elephant, it tramples in the pure streams, and first troubles them, then stoops and drinks, when he can least see his huge deformity.

2. But the heart of man hath yet another stratagem to secure its iniquity by the means of ignorance; and that is, incogitancy or inconsideration. For there is wrought upon the spirits of many men great impressions by education, by a modest and temperate nature, by human laws, and the customs and severities of sober persons, and the fears of religion, and the awfulness of a reverend man, and the several arguments and endearments of virtue: and it is not in the nature of some men to do an act in despite of reason, and religion, and arguments, and reverence, and modesty, and fear; but men are forced from their sin by the violence of the grace of God, when they hear it speak. But so a Roman gentleman kept off a whole band of soldiers, who were sent to murder him, and his eloquence was stronger than their anger and design: but, suddenly, a rude trooper rushed upon him, who neither had nor would hear him speak; and he thrust his spear into that throat, whose music had charmed all his fellows into peace and gentleness. So do we. The grace of God is armour and defence enough, against the most violent incursion of the spirits and the works of darkness; but then we must hear its excellent charms, and consider its reasons, and remember its precepts, and dwell with its discourses. But this the heart of man loves not. If I be tempted to uncleanness, or to an act of oppression, instantly the grace of God represents to me, that the pleasure of the sin is transient and vain, unsatisfying and empty; that

I shall die, and then I shall wish too late that I had never done it. It tells me, that I displease God who made me, who feeds me, who blesses me, who fain would save me. It represents to me all the joys of heaven, and the horrors and amazements of a sad eternity ; and if I will stay and hear them, ten thousand excellent things besides, fit to be twisted about my understanding for ever. But here the heart of man shuffles all these discourses into disorder, and will not be put to the trouble of answering the objections ; but, by a mere wildness of purpose, and rudeness of resolution, ventures at all, and does the thing, not because it thinks it fit to do so, but because it will not consider whether it be or no ; it is enough, that it pleases a present appetite. And if such incogitancy comes to be habitual, as it is in very many men,—first by resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit, then by quenching him,—we shall find the consequence to be, first an indifferency,—then a dullness,—then a lethargy,—then a direct hating the ways of God ;—and it commonly ends in a retchlessness of spirit, to be manifested on our death-bed ; when the man shall pass hence, not like the shadow, but like the dog that departeth without sense, or interest, or apprehension, or real concernment, in the considerations of eternity : and it is but just, when we will not hear our King speak and plead, not to save himself, but us, to speak for our peace, and innocency, and salvation, to prevent our ruin, and our intolerable calamity. Certainly, we are much in love with the wages of death, when we cannot endure to hear God call us back, and “ stop our ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely.”

Nay, farther yet, we suffer the arguments of religion to have so little impression upon our spirits, that they operate but like the discourses of childhood, or the problems of uncertain philosophy. A man talks of religion but as of a dream, and from thence he awakens into the businesses of the world, and acts them deliberately, with perfect action and full resolution, and contrives, and considers, and lives in them : but when he falls asleep again, or is taken from the scene of his own employment and choice, then he dreams again, and religion makes such impressions as is the conversation of a dreamer, and he acts accordingly. Theocritus tells of a fisherman, that dreamed he had taken a fish of gold ; upon which being overjoyed, he made a vow, that he would never fish more : but when he waked, he soon declared his vow to be null, because he found his golden fish was escaped away through the holes of his eyes, when he first opened them. Just so we do in the purposes of religion ; sometimes, in a good mood, we seem to see heaven opened, and all the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem paved with gold and precious stones, and we are ravished with spiritual apprehensions, and resolve never to return to the low affections of the world, and the impure adherences of sin : but when this flash of lightning is gone, and we converse again with the inclinations and habitual desires of our false hearts, those other desires and fine considerations disband, and the resolutions, taken in that pious fit melt into indifference and old customs.

The effect of all is this, that we are ignorant of the things of God. We make religion to be the work of a few hours in the whole year ; we are without fancy or affection to the severities of holy living ; we reduce religion to the believing of a few articles, and doing nothing that is considerable ; we pray seldom, and then but very coldly and indifferently ; we

communicate not so often as the sun salutes both the tropics ; we profess Christ, but dare not die for him ; we are factions for a religion, and will not live according to its precepts ; we call ourselves Christians, and love to be ignorant of many of the laws of Christ, lest our knowledge should force us into shame, or into the troubles of a holy life. All the mischiefs that you can suppose to happen to a furious inconsiderate person, running after the wildfires of the night, over rivers, and rocks, and precipices, without sun or star, or angel or man, to guide him ; all that, and ten thousand times worse, may you suppose to be the certain lot of him, who gives himself up to the conduct of a passionate, blind heart, whom no fire can warm, and no sun can enlighten ; who hates light, and loves to dwell in the region of darkness. That is the first general mischief of the heart, it is possessed with blindness, wilful and voluntary.

PRIDE.

THE heart of man is strangely proud. If men commend us, we think we have reason to distinguish ourselves from others, since the voice of discerning men hath already made the separation. If men do not commend us, we think they are stupid, and understand us not ; or envious, and hold their tongues in spite. If we are praised by many, then "Fame is the voice of God." If we be praised but by few, then we cry, 'These are wise, and one wise man is worth a whole herd of the people.' But if we be praised by none at all, we resolve to be even with all the world, and speak well of nobody, and think well only of ourselves. And then we have such beggarly arts, such tricks, to cheat for praise. We inquire after our faults and failings, only to be told we have none, but did excellently ; and then we are pleased : we rail upon our actions, only to be chidden for so doing ; and then he is our friend who chides us into a good opinion of ourselves, which however all the world cannot make us part with. Nay humility itself makes us proud ; so false, so base, is the heart of man. For humility is so noble a virtue, that even pride itself puts on its upper garment : and we do like those who cannot endure to look upon an ugly or a deformed person, and yet will give a great price for a picture extremely like him. Humility is despised in substance, but courted and admired in effigy. And *Æsop's* picture was sold for two talents, when himself was made a slave at the price of two philippics. And because humility makes a man to be honoured, therefore we imitate all its garbs and postures, its civilities and silence, its modesties and condescensions. And, to prove that we are extremely proud, in the midst of all this pageantry, we should be extremely angry at any man that should say we are proud ; and that is a sure sign we are so. And in the midst of all our arts to seem humble, we use devices to bring ourselves into talk ; we thrust ourselves into company, we listen at doors, and, like the greatbeards in Rome that pretended philosophy and strict life, "we walk by the obelisk," and meditate in piazzas, that they that meet us may talk of us, and they that follow may cry out, "Behold ! there goes an excellent man ! He is very prudent, or very learned, or a charitable person, or a good housekeeper, or at least very humble."

RELATION BETWEEN SUFFERING AND PIETY

AT DIFFERENT PERIODS IN THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

So long as the world lived by sense, and discourses of natural reason, as they were abated with human infirmities, and not all heightened by the Spirit and divine revelations ; so long men took their accounts of good and bad by their being prosperous or unfortunate ; and amongst the basest and most ignorant of men, that only was accounted honest which was profitable ; and he only wise, that was rich ; and those men beloved of God, who received from him all that might satisfy their lust, their ambition, or their revenge. But because God sent wise men into the world, and they were treated rudely by the world, and exercised with evil accidents, and this seemed so great a discouragement to virtue, that even these wise men were more troubled to reconcile virtue and misery, than to reconcile their affections to the suffering ; God was pleased to enlighten their reason with a little beam of faith, or else heightened their reason by wiser principles than those of vulgar understandings, and taught them in the clear glass of faith, or the dim perspective of philosophy, to look beyond the cloud, and there to spy that there stood glories behind their curtain, to which they could not come but by passing through the cloud, and being wet with the dew of heaven and the waters of affliction. And according as the world grew more enlightened by faith, so it grew more dark with mourning and sorrows. God sometimes sent a light of fire, and a pillar of a cloud, and the brightness of an angel, and the lustre of a star, and the sacrament of a rainbow, to guide his people through their portion of sorrows, and to lead them through troubles to rest : but as the Sun of Righteousness approached towards the chambers of the east, and sent the harbingers of light peeping through the curtains of the night, and leading on the day of faith and brightest revelation ; so God sent degrees of trouble upon wise and good men, that now, in the same degree in the which the world lives by faith, and not by sense, in the same degree they might be able to live in virtue even while she lived in trouble, and not reject so great a beauty, because she goes in mourning, and hath a black cloud of cypress drawn before her face. Literally thus : God first entertained their services, and allured and prompted on the infirmities of the infant world by temporal prosperity ; but by degrees changed his method ; and as men grew stronger in the knowledge of God, and the expectations of heaven, so they grew weaker in their fortunes, more afflicted in their bodies, more abated in their expectations, more subject to their enemies, and were to endure the contradiction of sinners, and the immission of the sharpnesses of providence and divine economy.

First, Adam was placed in a garden of health and pleasure from which when he fell, he was only tied to enter into the covenant of natural sorrows, which he and all his posterity till the flood ran through : but in all that period they had the whole wealth of the earth before them ; they needed not fight for empires, or places for their cattle to graze in ; they lived long, and felt no want, no slavery, no tyranny, no war ; and the evils that happened, were single, personal, and natural ; and no violences were then done, but they were like those things which the law calls ‘ rare contingencies ;’ for which as the law can now take no care and make no provisions,

so then there was no law, but men lived free, and rich, and long, and they exercised no virtues but natural, and knew no felicity but natural: and so long their prosperity was just as was their virtue, because it was a natural instrument towards all that which they knew of happiness. But this public easiness and quiet, the world turned into sin; and unless God did compel men to do themselves good, they would undo themselves: and then God broke in upon them with a flood, and destroyed that generation, that he might begin the government of the world upon a new stock, and bind virtue upon men's spirits by new bands endeared to them by new hopes and fears.

Then God made new laws, and gave to princes the power of the sword, and men might be punished to death in certain cases, and man's life was shortened, and slavery was brought into the world and the state of servants: and then war began, and evils multiplied upon the face of the earth; in which it is naturally certain that they that are most violent and injurious, prevailed upon the weaker and more innocent; and every tyranny that began from Nimrod to this day, and every usurper, was a peculiar argument to show that God began to teach the world virtue by suffering; and that therefore he suffered tyrannies and usurpations to be in the world, and to be prosperous, and the rights of men to be snatched away from the owners, that the world might be established in potent and settled governments, and the sufferers be taught all the passive virtues of the soul. For so God brings good out of evil, turning tyranny into the benefits of government, and violence into virtue, and sufferings into rewards. And this was the second change of the world: personal miseries were brought in upon Adam and his posterity, as a punishment of sin in the first period; and in the second, public evils were brought in by tyrants and usurpers, and God suffered them as the first elements of virtue, men being just newly put to school to infant sufferings. But all this was not much.

Christ's line was not yet drawn forth; it began not to appear in what family the King of sufferings should descend, till Abraham's time; and therefore till then there were no greater sufferings than what I have now reckoned. But when Abraham's family was chosen from among the many nations, and began to belong to God by a special right, and he was designed to be the father of the Messias; then God found out a new way to try him, even with a sound affliction, commanding him to offer his beloved Isaac: but this was accepted, and being intended by Abraham, was not intended by God; for this was a type of Christ, and therefore was also but a type of sufferings. And excepting the sufferings of the old periods, and the sufferings of nature, and accident, we see no change made for a long time after; but God having established a law in Abraham's family, did build it upon promises of health, and peace, and victory, and plenty, and riches; and so long as they did not prevaricate the law of their God, so long they were prosperous: but God kept a remnant of Canaanites in the land, like a rod held over them, to vex or to chastise them into obedience, in which while they persevered, nothing could hurt them; and that saying of David needs no other sense but the letter of its own expression, "I have been young, and now am old; and yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." The godly generally were prosperous, and a good cause seldom had an ill end, and a good man never died an ill death,—till the law had spent a great part of its time, and it descended towards its declension and period. But that the great Prince of sufferings might

not appear upon his stage of tragedies without some forerunners of sorrow, God was pleased to choose out good men, and honour them, by making them to become little images of suffering. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, were martyrs of the law; but these were single deaths: Shadrach, Meshech, Abednego, were thrown into a burning furnace, and Daniel, into a den of lions, and Susanna was accused for adultery; but these were but little arrests of the prosperity of the godly. As the time drew nearer that Christ should be manifest, so the sufferings grew bigger and more numerous; and Antiochus raised up a sharp persecution in the time of the Maccabees, in which many passed through the red sea of blood into the bosom of Abraham; and then Christ came. And that was the third period in which the changed method of God's providence was perfected: for Christ was to do his great work by sufferings, and by sufferings was to enter into blessedness; and by his passion he was made Prince of the catholic church, and as our head was, so must the members be. God made the same covenant with us that he did with his most holy Son, and Christ obtained no better conditions for us than for himself; that was not to be looked for: "The servant must not be above his master; it is well if he be as his master: if the world persecuted him, they will also persecute us;" and "from the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." For though the old law was established in the promises of temporal prosperity; yet the Gospel is founded in temporal adversity; it is directly a covenant of sufferings and sorrows; for now "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." This text is a direct antinomy to the common persuasions of tyrannous, carnal, and vicious men, who reckon nothing good but what is prosperous: for though that proposition had many degrees of truth in the beginning of the law, yet the case is now altered, God hath established its contradictory; and now every good man must look for persecution, and every good cause must expect to thrive by the sufferings and patience of holy persons: and, as men do well and suffer evil, so they are dear to God; and whom he loves most, he afflicts most, and does this with a design of the greatest mercy in the world.

CHRIST THE EXEMPLAR OF SUFFERING.

HE entered into the world with all the circumstances of poverty. He had a star to illustrate his birth; but a stable for his bed-chamber, and a manger for his cradle. The angels sang hymns when he was born; but he was cold and cried, uneasy and unprovided. He lived long in the trade of a carpenter; he, by whom God made the world, had, in his first years, the business of a mean and ignoble trade. He did good wherever he went; and almost wherever he went, was abused. He deserved heaven for his obedience, but found a cross in his way thither: and if ever any man had reason to expect fair usages from God, and to be dandled in the lap of ease, softness, and a prosperous fortune, he it was only that could deserve that, or any thing that can be good. But, after he had chosen to live a life of virtue, of poverty, and labour, he entered into a state of death;

whose shame and trouble were great enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. And I shall choose to express this mystery in the words of Scripture. He died not by a single or a sudden death, but he was the "Lamb slain from the beginning of the world:" for he was massacred in Abel, saith St Paulinus; he was tossed upon the waves of the sea in the person of Noah; it was he that went out of his country, when Abraham was called from Charran, and wandered from his native soil; he was offered up in Isaac, persecuted in Jacob, betrayed in Joseph, blinded in Samsen, affronted in Moses, sawed in Isaiah, cast into the dungeon with Jeremiah; for all these were types of Christ suffering. And then his passion continued even after his resurrection: for it is he that suffers in all his members; it is he that "endures the contradiction of all sinners;" it is he that is "the Lord of life, and is crucified again, and put to open shame" in all the sufferings of his servants, and sins of rebels, and defiance of apostates and renegadoes, and violence of tyrants, and injustice of usurpers, and the persecutions of his church. It is he that is stoned in St Stephen, flayed in the person of St Bartholomew: he was roasted upon St Laurence's gridiron, exposed to lions in St Ignatius, burnt in St Polycarp, frozen in the lake where stood forty martyrs of Cappadocia.

All that Christ came for, was, or was mingled with, sufferings: for all those little joys which God sent, either to recreate his person, or to illustrate his office, were abated, or attended with afflictions; God being more careful to establish in him the covenant of sufferings, than to refresh his sorrows. Presently after the angels had finished their hallelujahs, he was forced to fly to save his life; and the air became full of shrieks of the desolate mothers of Bethlehem for their dying babes. God had no sooner made him illustrious with a voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the waters of baptism, but he was delivered over to be tempted and assaulted by the devil in the wilderness. His transfiguration was a bright ray of glory; but then also he entered into a cloud, and was told a sad story what he was to suffer at Jerusalem. And upon Palm Sunday, when he rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and was adored with the acclamations of a King and a God, he wet the palms with his tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls of heaven, that descended upon Mount Hermon; weeping, in the midst of this triumph, over obstinate, perishing, and malicious Jerusalem. For this Jesus was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds as a sacrament to confirm a promise, and establish a grace; he was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud; in his best days he was but half triumph and half sorrow: he was sent to tell of his Father's mercies, and that God intended to spare us; but appeared not but in the company or in the retinue of a shower, and of foul weather. But I need not tell that Jesus, beloved of God, was a suffering person: that which concerns this question most, is, that he made for us a covenant of sufferings: his doctrines were such as expressly and by consequent enjoin and suppose sufferings, and a state of affliction; his very promises were sufferings; his beatitudes were sufferings; his rewards, and his arguments to invite men to follow him, were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter.

For if we sum up the commandments of Christ, we shall find humility, — mortification, — self-denial, — repentance, — renouncing the world, —

mourning,—taking up the cross,—dying for him,—patience and poverty, —to stand in the chiefest rank of Christian precepts, and in the direct order to heaven: “He that will be my disciple, must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” We must follow him that was crowned with thorns and sorrows, him that was drenched in Cedron, nailed upon the cross, that deserved all good, and suffered all evil: that is the sum of the Christian religion, as it distinguishes from all religions in the world. To which we may add the express precept recorded by St James; “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into weeping.”* You see the commandments: will you also see the promises? These they are:—“In the world ye shall have tribulation; in me, ye shall have peace:—Through many tribulations ye shall enter into heaven:—He that loseth father and mother, wives and children, houses and lands, for my name’s sake and the gospel’s, shall receive a hundred fold in this life, with persecution;” that is part of his reward: and, “He chastiseth every son that he receiveth;—if ye be exempt from sufferings, ye are bastards, and not sons.” These are some of Christ’s promises: will you see some of Christ’s blessings that he gives his church? “Blessed are the poor: blessed are the hungry and thirsty: blessed are they that mourn: blessed are the humble: blessed are the persecuted.”† Of the eight beatitudes, five of them have temporal misery and meanness, or an afflicted condition, for their subject. Will you at last see some of the rewards which Christ hath propounded to his servants, to invite them to follow him? “When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me:” when Christ is “lifted up, as Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness,” that is, lifted upon the cross, then “he will draw us after him.”—“To you it is given for Christ,” saith St Paul, when he went to sweeten and to flatter the Philippians:‡ well, what is given to them? some great favours surely; true—“It is not only given that you believe in Christ,”—though that be a great matter—“but also that you suffer for him,” that is the highest of your honour. And therefore St James, “My brethren count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations:”§ and St Peter; “Communicating with the sufferings of Christ, rejoice.”|| And St James again; “We count them blessed that have suffered:”¶ and St Paul, when he gives his blessing to the Thessalonians, useth this form of prayer; “Our Lord direct your hearts in the charity of God, and in the patience and sufferings of Christ.”** So that if we will serve the King of sufferings, whose crown was of thorns, whose sceptre was a reed of scorn, whose imperial robe was a scarlet of mockery, whose throne was the cross; we must serve him in sufferings, in poverty of spirit, in humility and mortification; and for our reward we shall have persecution, and all its blessed consequents. And this it is to be a Christian.

* James iv. 9.

† Matth. v.

‡ Phil. i. 29.

§ James i. 2.

|| 1 Pet. iv. 13.

¶ James v. 11.

** 2 Thes. iii. 5.

SUFFERINGS OF THE APOSTLES AND PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

IF we begin with the apostles, who were to persuade the world to become Christian, and to use proper arguments of invitations, we shall find that they never offered an argument of temporal prosperity ; they never promised empires and thrones on earth, nor riches, nor temporal power : and it would have been soon confuted, if they who were whipt and imprisoned, banished and scattered, persecuted and tormented, should have promised sunshine to others, which they could not to themselves. Of all the apostles there was not one, that died a natural death but only St John ; and did he escape ? Yes : but he was put into a cauldron of scalding lead and oil before the Porta Latina in Rome, and escaped death by miracle, though no miracle was wrought to make him escape the torture. And, besides this, he lived long in banishment, and that was worse than St Peter's chains. And after a long and laborious life, and the affliction of being detained from his crown, and his sorrows for the death of his fellow disciples, he died full of days and sufferings. And when St Paul was taken into the apostolate, his commissions were signed in these words : " I will show unto him how great things he must suffer for my name."* And his whole life was a continual suffering. " I die daily," was his motto ; and his lesson that he daily learned was, to " know Christ Jesus, and him crucified ;" and all his joy was " to rejoice in the cross of Christ ;" and the changes of his life were nothing but the changes of his sufferings, and the variety of his labours. For though Christ hath finished his own sufferings for expiation of the world ; yet there are " portions that are behind of the sufferings" of Christ, which must be filled up by his body, the church ; and happy are they that put in the greatest symbol ; for " in the same measure you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, in the same shall ye be also of the consolation." And therefore, concerning St Paul, as it was also concerning Christ, there is nothing, or but very little, in scripture, relating to his person and the chances of his private life, but his labours and persecutions ; as if the Holy Ghost did think nothing fit to stand upon record for Christ but sufferings.

And now began to work the greatest glory of the divine providence : here was the cause of Christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned and full of wise men ; the gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and in demonstration of the Spirit : God was on one side, and the devil on the other ; they each of them dressed up their city ; Babylon upon earth, Jerusalem from above. The devil's city was full of pleasure, triumphs, victories, and cruelty ; good news, and great wealth ; conquest over kings, and making nations tributary : they " bound kings in chains, and the nobles with links of iron ;" and the inheritance of the earth was theirs : the Romans were lords over the greatest part of the world ; and God permitted to the devil the firmament and increase, the wars and the success of that people giving to him an entire power of disposing the great changes of the world, so as might best increase their greatness and power : and he therefore did it, because all the power

* Acts ix. 16.

of the Roman greatness was a professed enemy to Christianity. And on the other side, God was to build up Jerusalem, and the kingdom of the gospel; and he chose to build it of hewn stone, cut and broken: the apostles he chose for preachers, and they had no learning; women and mean people were the first disciples, and they had no power; the devil was to lose his kingdom, he wanted no malice: and therefore he stirred up, and, as well as he could, he made active all the power of Rome, and all the learning of the Greeks, and all the malice of barbarous people, and all the prejudice and the obstinacy of the Jews, against this doctrine and institution, which preached, and promised, and brought persecution along with it. On the one side, there was "the offence of the cross;" on the other, "the patience of the saints:" and what was the event? They that had overcome the world, could not strangle Christianity. But so have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the power of darkness, and, without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so retire, that its memory was lost in the joys and sprightfulness of the morning: and Christianity without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength, or human eloquence, without challenging of privileges or fighting against tyranny, without alteration of government and scandal of princes, with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the world into Christian, and persecution into victory.

For Christ, who began, and lived, and died in sorrows, perceiving his own sufferings to succeed so well, and that "for suffering death, he was crowned with immortality," resolved to take all his disciples and servants to the fellowship of the same suffering, that they might have a participation of his glory; knowing, God had opened no gate of heaven but "the narrow gate," to which the cross was the key. And since Christ now being our high-priest in heaven, intercedes for us by representing his passion, and the dolours of the cross, that even in glory he might still preserve the memories of his past sufferings, for which the Father did so delight in him; he also designs to present us to God dressed in the same robe, and treated in the same manner, and honoured with "the marks of the Lord Jesus;" "He hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son." And if under a head crowned with thorns, we bring to God members circled with roses, and softness, and delicacy, triumphant members in the militant church, God will reject us, he will not know us who are so unlike our elder brother: for we are members of the Lamb, not of the lion; and of Christ's suffering part, not of the triumphant part: and for three hundred years together the church lived upon blood, and was nourished with blood; the blood of her own children. Thirty three bishops of Rome in immediate succession were put to violent and unnatural deaths; and so were all the churches of the east and west built; the cause of Christ and of religion was advanced by the sword, but it was the sword of the persecutors, not of resisters or warriors: they were "all baptized into the death of Christ;" their very profession and institution is to live like him, and, when he requires it, to die for him: that is the very formality, the life and essence, of Christianity. This, I say, lasted for three hundred years, that the prayers, and the backs, and the necks of Christians fought against the rods and axes of the persecutors, and prevailed, till the country, and the cities, and the court itself, was filled with Christians. And by this time the army of

martyrs was vast and numerous, and the number of sufferers blunted the hangman's sword. For Christ had triumphed over the princes and powers of the world, before he would admit them to serve him; he first felt their malice, before he would make use of their defence; to show, that it was not his necessity that required it, but his grace that admitted kings and queens to be nurses of the church.

SUFFERINGS TO BE UNDERGONE BY CHRISTIANS

IN AN AGE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND PEACE.

IT is so glorious a thing to be like Christ, to be dressed like the prince of the catholic church, who was "a man of sufferings," and to whom a prosperous and unafflicted person is very unlike, that in all ages the servants of God have "put on the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left:" that is, in the sufferings of persecution, or the labours of mortification; in patience under the rod of God, or by election of our own; by toleration, or self-denial; by actual martyrdom, or by aptness or disposition towards it; by dying for Christ, or suffering for him; by being willing to part with all when he calls for it, and by parting with what we can for the relief of his poor members. For, know this, there is no state in the church so serene, no days so prosperous, in which God does not give to his servants the powers and opportunities of suffering for him; not only they that die for Christ, but they that live according to his laws, shall find some lives to part with, and many ways to suffer for Christ. To kill and crucify the old man and all his lusts, to mortify a beloved sin, to fight against temptations, to do violence to our bodies, to live chastely, to suffer affronts patiently, to forgive injuries and debts, to renounce all prejudice and interest in religion, and to choose our side for truth's sake (not because it is prosperous, but because it pleases God), to be charitable beyond our power, to reprove our betters with modesty and openness, to displease men rather than God, to be at enmity with the world, that you may preserve friendship with God, to deny the importunity and troublesome kindness of a drinking friend, to own truth in despite of danger or scorn, to despise shame, to refuse worldly pleasures when they tempt your soul beyond duty or safety, to take pains in the cause of religion, the "labour of love," and the crossing of your anger, peevishness, and morosity: these are the daily sufferings of a Christian; and if we perform them well, will have the same reward and an equal smart, and greater labour, than the plain suffering the hangman's sword. This I have discoursed, to represent unto you, that you cannot be exempted from the similitude of Christ's sufferings: that God will shut no age nor no man from his portion of the cross; that we cannot fail of the result of this predestination, nor without our own fault be excluded from the covenant of sufferings. "Judgment must begin at God's house," and enters first upon the sons and heirs of the kingdom; and if it be not by the direct persecution of tyrants, it will be by the direct persecution of the devil, or infirmities of our own flesh.

THE ENDS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

IN THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE SAINTS.

IT follows now that we inquire concerning the reasons of the divine Providence in this administration of affairs, so far as he hath been pleased to draw aside the curtain, and to unfold the leaves of his counsels and predestination. And for such an inquiry we have the precedent of the Prophet Jeremy; "righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let us talk to thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy, that deal very treacherously? thou hast planted them, yea they have taken root; they grow, yea they bring forth fruit."* Concerning which in general the Prophet Malachi gives this account after the same complaint made: "and now we call the proud happy; and they that work wickedness are set up; yea they that tempt God are even delivered. They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name. And they shall be mine (saith the Lord of hosts) in that day when I bind up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."† In this interval, which is a valley of tears, it is no wonder if they rejoice who shall weep for ever; and "they that sow in tears" shall have no cause to complain, when God gathers all the mourners into his kingdom, "they shall reap with joy."

For innocence and joy were appointed to dwell together for ever. And joy went not first; but when innocence went away, sorrow and sickness dispossessed joy of its habitation; and now this world must be always a scene of sorrows, and no joy can grow here but that which is imaginary and fantastic. There is no worldly joy, no joy proper for this world, but that which wicked persons fancy to themselves in the hopes, and designs of iniquity. He that covets his neighbour's wife or land dreams of fine things, and thinks it a fair condition to be rich and cursed, to be a beast and die, or to lie wallowing in his filthiness: but those holy souls who are not in love with the leprosy and the itch for the pleasure of scratching, they know no pleasure can grow from the thorns which Adam planted in the hedges of paradise; and that sorrow, which was brought in by sin, must not go away till it hath returned us into the first condition of innocence: the same instant that quits us from sin and the failings of mortality, the same instant wipes all tears from our eyes; but that is not in this world. In the mean time,

God afflicts the godly, that he might manifest many of his attributes, and his servants exercise many of these virtues. For, without the sufferings of saints, God should lose the glories, 1. Of bringing good out of evil: 2. Of being with us in tribulation: 3. Of sustaining our infirmities: 4. Of triumphing over the malice of his enemies. 5. Without the suffering of saints, where were the exaltation of the cross, the consecration of the members to Christ their head, the coronets of martyrs? 6.

* Jer. xii. 1, 2.

† Mal. iii. 14, &c.

Where the trial of our faith? 7. Or the exercise of long-suffering? 8. Where were the opportunities to give God the greatest love? which cannot be but by dying and suffering for him. 9. How should that which the world calls folly, prove the greatest wisdom? 10. And God be glorified by events contrary to the probability and expectation of their causes? 11. By the suffering of saints, the Christian religion is proved to be most excellent; whilst the iniquity and cruelty of the adversaries prove the 'attraction of the sect,' as Tertullian's phrase is; it invites men to consider the secret excellences of that religion, for which and in which men are so willing to die: for that religion must needs be worth looking into, which so many wise and excellent men do so much value above their lives and fortune. 12. That a man's nature is passible, is its best advantage; for by it we are all redeemed: by the passiveness and sufferings of our Lord and brother we were all rescued from the portion of devils; and by our suffering we have a capacity of serving God beyond that of angels; who indeed can sing God's praise with a sweeter note, and obey him with a more unabated will, and execute his commands with a swifter wing and a greater power; but they cannot die for God, they can lose no lands for him; and he that did so for us all, and commanded us to do so for him, is ascended far above all angels, and is heir of a greater glory. 13. '*Do this and live,*' was the covenant of the law; but in the Gospel it is, '*Suffer this, and live:*'—"He that forsaketh house and land, friends and life, for my sake, is my disciple." 14. By the sufferings of saints God chastises their follies and levities, and suffers not their errors to climb up into heresies, nor their infirmities into crimes.—If David numbers the people of Judea, God punishes him sharply and loudly; but if Augustus Cæsar numbers all the world, he is let alone and prospers. And in giving physic, we always call that just and fitting that is useful and profitable: no man complains of his physician's iniquity, if he burns one part to cure all the body; if the belly be punished to chastise the floods of humour, and the evils of a surfeit. Punishments can no other way turn into a mercy, but when they are designed for medicine; and God is then very careful of thy soul, when he will suppress every of its evils, when it first discomposes the order of things and spirits. And what hurt is it to thee, if a persecution draws thee from the vanities of a former prosperity, and forces thee into the sobrieties of a holy life? What loss is it? what misery? Is not the least sin a greater evil than the greatest of sufferings? God smites some at the beginning of their sin; others, not till a long while after it is done. The first cannot say that God is slack in punishing, and have no need to complain that the wicked are prosperous; for they find that God is apt enough to strike: and therefore, that he strikes them, and strikes not the other, is no defect of justice, but because there is not mercy in store for them that sin, and suffer not. 15. For if God strikes the godly that they may repent, it is no wonder that God is so good to his servants; but then we must not call that a misery, which God intends to make an instrument of saving them. And if God forbears to strike the wicked out of anger, and because he hath decreed death and hell against them, we have no reason to envy that they ride in a gilded chariot to the gallows; but if God forbear the wicked, that by his long sufferance they may be invited to repentance, then we may cease to wonder at the dispensation, and argue comforts to the afflicted saints, thus: for if God be so gracious to the wicked, how much more is he to the godly?

And if sparing the wicked be a mercy ; then, smiting the godly, being the expression of his greater kindness, affliction is of itself the more eligible condition. If God hath some degrees of kindness for the persecutors, so much as to invite them by kindness ; how much greater is his love to them that are persecuted ? And therefore, his intercourse with them is also a greater favour ; and, indeed, it is the surer way of securing the duty : fair means may do it, but severity will fix and secure it. Fair means are more apt to be abused than harsh physic ; that may be turned into wantonness, but none but the impudent and grown sinners despise all God's judgments ; and therefore, God chooses this way to deal with his erring servants, that they may obtain an infallible and a great salvation. And yet if God spares not his children, how much less the reprobates ? and therefore as sparing the latter commonly is a sad curse, so the smiting the former is a very great mercy. 16. For by this economy God gives us a great argument to prove the resurrection, since to his saints and servants he assigns sorrow for their present portion. Sorrow cannot be the reward of virtue ; it may be its instrument and handmaid, but not its reward ; and therefore, it may be intermedial to some great purposes, but they must look for their portion in the other life : " For if in this life only we had hope, then we were of all men the most miserable : " It is St Paul's argument to prove a beatifical resurrection. And we therefore may learn to estimate the state of the afflicted godly to be a mercy, great in proportion to the greatness of that reward, which these afflictions come to secure and to prove. It is a great matter, and infinite blessing, to escape the pains of hell ; and therefore, that condition is also very blessed which God sends us, to create and confirm our hopes of that excellent mercy. 17. The sufferings of the saints are the sum of Christian philosophy : they are sent to wean us from the vanities and affections of this world, and to create in us strong desires of heaven ; while God causes us to be here treated rudely, that we may long to be in our country, where God shall be our portion, and angels our companions, and Christ our perpetual feast, and never-ceasing joy shall be our conditions and entertainment. " O death, how bitter art thou to a man that is at ease and rest in his possessions ! " * But he that is uneasy in his body, and unquiet in his possessions, vexed in his person, discomposed in his designs, who finds no pleasure, no rest here, will be glad to fix his heart where only he shall have what he can desire, and what can make him happy. As long as the waters of persecution are upon the earth, so long we dwell in the ark : but where the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to a wandering course of life, and never to return to the house of her safety. What shall I say more ? 18. Christ nourisheth his church by sufferings. 19. He hath given a single blessing to all other graces ; but to them that are ' persecuted,' he hath promised a double one : † it being a double favour, first to be innocent like Christ, and then to be afflicted like him. 20. Without this, the miracles of patience, which God hath given to fortify the spirits of the saints, would signify nothing. " As no man would bear evils without a cause, so no man could bear so much without the supporting hand of God ; and we need not the Holy Ghost to so great purposes, if our lot were not sorrow and persecution. And therefore, without this condition of suffering, the Spirit of God shall lose that glorious attribute of the Holy Ghost, ' the Comforter.'

* Ecclus. iv. 11.

† Matt. v. 12.

SAFETY OF THE CHRISTIAN IN TIME OF DISTRESS.

THE Christian is safe in the midst of his persecutions ; they may disturb his rest, and discompose his fancy, but they are like the fiery chariot to Elias ; he is encircled with fire, and rare circumstances and strange usages, but is carried up to heaven in a robe of flames. And so was Noah safe when the flood came ; and was the great type and instance too of the verification of this proposition ; he was a righteous man and a preacher of righteousness ; he was put into a strange condition, perpetually wandering, shut up in a prison of wood, living upon faith, having never had the experience of being safe in floods. And so have I often seen young and unskilful persons sitting in a little boat, when every little wave sporting about the sides of the vessel, and every motion and dancing of the barge, seemed a danger, and made them cling fast upon their fellows ; and yet all the while they were as safe as if they sat under a tree, while a gentle wind shook the leaves into a refreshment and a cooling shade : and the unskilful, inexperienced Christian shrieks out, whenever his vessel shakes, thinking it always a danger that the watery pavement is not stable and resident, like a rock ; and yet all his danger is in himself, none at all from without ; for he is indeed moving upon the waters, but fastened to a rock ; faith is his foundation, and hope is his anchor, and death is his harbour, and Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country ; and all the evils of poverty or affronts, of tribunals and evil judges, of fears and sadder apprehensions, are but like the loud wind blowing from the right point, they make a noise, and drive faster to the harbour ; and if we do not leave the ship, and leap into the sea ; quit the interests of religion, and run to the securities of the world ; cut our cables, and dissolve our hopes ; grow impatient, and hug a wave, and die in its embraces ; we are as safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm, when we are befriended with the world.

AFFLICTION OF THE CHRISTIAN FOLLOWED BY GLORY.

ISAAC digged three wells. The first was called ‘Contention ;’ for he drank the waters of strife, and digged the well with his sword. The second well was not altogether so hard a purchase, he got it with some trouble ; but that being over, he had some room, and his fortune swelled, and he called his well ‘Enlargement.’ But his third he called ‘Abundance ;’ and then he dipped his foot in oil, and drank freely as out of a river. Every good man first “sows in tears ;” he first drinks of the bottle of his own tears, sorrow and trouble, labour and disquiet, strivings and temptations ; but if they pass through a torrent, and virtue becomes easy and habitual, they find their hearts enlarged and made sprightly by the visitations of God, and refreshment of his Spirit ; and then their hearts are enlarged, they know how to gather the down and softnesses from the sharpest thistles.

At first we cannot serve God but by passions and doing violence to all our wilder inclinations, and suffering the violence of tyrants and unjust persons: the second days of virtue are pleasant and easy in the midst of all the appendant labours. But when the Christian's last pit is digged, when he is descended to his grave, and hath finished his state of sorrows and suffering; then God opens the river of abundance, the rivers of life and never-ceasing felicities. And this is that which God promised to his people: "I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer."* So much as moments are exceeded by eternity, and the sighing of a man by the joys of an angel, and a salutary frown by the light of God's countenance, a few groans by the infinite and eternal hallelujahs; so much are the sorrows of the godly to be undervalued in respect of what is deposited for them in the treasures of eternity. Their sorrows can die, but so cannot their joys. And if the blessed martyrs and confessors were asked concerning their past sufferings and their present rest, and the joys of their certain expectation, you should hear them glory in nothing but in the mercies of God, and "in the cross of the Lord Jesus." Every chain is a ray of light, and every prison is a palace, and every loss is the purchase of a kingdom, and every affront in the cause of God is an eternal honour, and every day of sorrow is a thousand years of comfort, multiplied with a never-ceasing numeration; days without night, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening: and they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away. Well might David say, "The cords" of my tent, my ropes, and the sorrow of my pilgrimage, "fell to me in a good ground, and I have a goodly heritage."—And when persecution hews a man down from a high fortune to an even one, or from thence to the face of the earth, or from thence to the grave; a good man is but preparing for a crown, and the tyrant does but first knock off the fetters of the soul, the manacles of passion and desire, sensual loves and lower appetites: and if God suffers him to finish the persecution, then he can but dismantle the soul's prison, and let the soul forth to fly to the mountains of rest: and all the intermedial evils are but like the Persian punishments; the executioner tore off their hairs, and rent their silken mantles, and discomposed their curious dressings, and lightly touched the skin; yet the offender cried out with most bitter exclamations, while his fault was expiated with a ceremony and without blood. So does God to his servants, he rends their upper garments, and strips them of their unnecessary wealth, and ties them to physic and salutary discipline; and they cry out under usages, which have nothing but the outward sense and opinion of evil, not the real substance. But if we would take the measure of images, we must not take the height of the base, but the proportion of the members; nor yet measure the estates of men by their big-looking supporter, or the circumstance of an exterior advantage, but by its proper commensuration in itself, as it stands in its order to eternity: and then the godly man that suffers sorrow and persecution, ought to be relieved by us, but needs not be pitied in the sum of affairs. But since the two estates of the world are

* Isa. liv. 6.

measured by time and by eternity, and divided by joy and sorrow, and no man shall have his portion of joys in both durations; the state of those men is insupportably miserable, who are fattened for slaughter, and are crowned like beasts for sacrifice; who are feared and fear, who cannot enjoy their purchases but by communications with others, and themselves have the least share, but themselves are alone in the misery and the saddest dangers, and they possess the whole portion of sorrows; to whom their prosperity gives but occasions to evil counsels and strength to do mischief, or nourish a serpent, or oppress a neighbour, or to nurse a lust, to increase folly, and treasure up calamity. And did ever any man see, or story tell, that any tyrant-prince kissed his rods and axes, his sword of justice, and his imperial ensigns of power? they shine like a taper, to all things but itself. But we read of many martyrs who kissed their chains, and hugged their stakes, and saluted their hangman with great endearments; and yet, abating the incursions of their seldom sins, these are their greatest evils; and such they are, with which a wise and a good man may be in love. And till the sinners and ungodly men can be so with their deep groans and broken sleeps, with the wrath of God and their portions of eternity; till they can rejoice in death, and long for a resurrection, and with delight and a greedy hope can think of the day of judgment; we must conclude that their glass gems and finest pageantry, their splendid outsides and great powers of evil, cannot make amends for that estate of misery, which is their portion with a certainty as great as is the truth of God, and all the articles of the Christian creed. Miserable men are they, who cannot be blessed, unless there be no day of judgment; who must perish, unless the word of God should fail. If that be all their hopes, then we may with a sad spirit and a soul of pity inquire into the question of the text, "Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" Even there where God's face shall never shine, where there shall be fire and no light, where there shall be no angels, but what are many thousand years turned into devils, where no good man shall ever dwell, and from whence the evil and the accursed shall never be dismissed. "O my God, let my soul never come into their counsels, nor lie down in their sorrows."

MERCY OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

WHAT wisdom, and philosophy, and perpetual experience, and revelation, and promises, and blessings, cannot do, a mighty fear can; it can allay the confidences of bold lust and imperious sin, and soften our spirit into the lowliness of a child, our revenge into the charity of prayers, our impudence into the blushings of a chidden girl; and therefore, God hath taken a course proportionable: for he is not so unmercifully merciful, as to give milk to an infirm lust, and hatch the egg to the bigness of a cockatrice. And, therefore, observe how it is that God's mercy prevails over all his works; it is even then when nothing can be discerned but his judgments: for as when a famine had been in Israel in the days of Ahab for three years and a half, when the angry prophet Elijah met the king, and presently a great wind arose, and the dust blew into the eyes of them that

walked abroad, and the face of the heavens was black and all tempest, yet then the prophet was the most gentle, and God began to forgive, and the heavens were more beautiful than when the sun puts on the brightest ornaments of a bridegroom, going from his chamber of the east : so it is in the economy of the divine mercy ; when God makes our faces black, and the winds blow so loud till the cordage cracks, and our gay fortunes split, and our houses are dressed with cypress and yew, “ and the mourners go about the streets,” this is nothing but the pomp of mercy, this is the funeral of our sins dressed indeed with emblems of mourning, and proclaimed with sad accents of death ; but the sight is refreshing, as the beauties of the field which God had blessed, and the sounds are healthful as the noise of a physician.

CHRISTIAN PROFESSION IN THE PRIMITIVE AND IN MODERN TIMES CONTRASTED.

WHEN Christianity, like the day-spring from the east, with a new light, did not only enlighten the world, but amazed the minds of men, and entertained their curiosities, and seized upon their warmer and more pregnant affections, it was no wonder that whole nations were converted at a sermon. and multitudes were instantly professed, and their understandings followed their affections, and their wills followed their understandings, and they were convinced by miracle, and overcome by grace, and passionate with zeal, and wisely governed by their guides, and ravished with the sanctity of their doctrine, and the holiness of their examples. And this was not only their duty, but a great distance of providence, that by the great religion and piety of the first professors, Christianity might be firmly planted, and unshaken by scandal, and hardened by persecution ; and that these first lights might be actual precedents for ever, and copies for us to transcribe in all descending ages of Christianity, that thither we might run to fetch oil to enkindle our extinguished lamps. But then piety was so universal, that it might well be enjoined by St Paul, that “ if a brother walked disorderly,” the Christians should avoid his company : he forbade them not to accompany with the heathens that walked disorderly ; “ for then a man must have gone out of the world ;” but they were not to endure so much as “ to eat with,” or “ to salute, a disorderly brother,” and ill-living Christian. But now, if we should observe this canon of St Paul, and refuse to eat or to converse with a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a perjured person, or covetous, we must also “ go out of the world :” for a pious or a holy person is now as rare as a disorderly Christian was at first ; and as Christianity is multiplied everywhere in name and title, so it is destroyed in life, essence, and proper operation ; and we have very great reason to fear, that Christ’s name will serve us to no end but to upbraid our baseness, and his person only to be our judge, and his laws as so many bills of accusation, and his graces and helps offered us but as aggravations of our unworthiness, and our baptism but an occasion of vow-breach, and the holy communion but an act of hypocrisy ; formality, or sacrilege, and all the promises of the Gospel but as pleasant dreams, and the threatenings but as arts of affrightment. For Christianity lasted pure and zealous ; it

kept its rules, and observed its own laws for three hundred years, or thereabouts; so long the church remained a virgin; for so long they were warmed with their first fires, and kept under discipline by the rod of persecution: but it hath declined almost fourteen hundred years together; prosperity and pride, wantonness and great fortunes, ambition and interest, false doctrine upon mistake and upon design, the malice of the devil and the arts of all his instruments, the want of zeal, and a weariness of spirit, filthy examples and a disreputation of piety and a strict life, seldom precedents and infinite discouragements, have caused so infinite a declension of piety and holy living, that what Papirius Massonius, one of their own, said of the popes of Rome, "No man looks for holiness in the bishops of Rome; those are the best popes who are not extremely wicked;" the same is too true of the greatest part of Christians; men are excellent persons, if they be not traitors, or adulterous, oppressors, or injurious, drunkards, or scandalous, if they be not "as this publican," as the vilest person with whom they converse.

He that is better than the dregs of his own age, whose religion is something above profaneness, and whose sobriety is a step or two from downright intemperance, whose discourse is not swearing, nor yet apt to edify, whose charity is set out in pity, and a gentle yearning and saying 'God help,' whose alms are contemptible, and his devotion infrequent; yet, as things are now, he is 'one of a thousand,' and he stands eminent and conspicuous in the valleys and lower grounds of the present piety; for a bank is a mountain upon a level: but what is rare and eminent in the manners of men this day, would have been scandalous, and have deserved the rod of an apostle, if it had been confronted with the fervours and rare devotion and religion of our fathers in the Gospel.

Men of old looked upon themselves as they stood by the examples and precedents of martyrs, and compared their piety to the life of St Paul, and estimated their zeal by the flames of the Boanerges, St James and his brother; and the bishops were thought reprobable, as they fell short of the ordinary government of St Peter and St John; and the assemblies of Christians were so holy, that every meeting had religion enough to hallow a house, and convert it to a church; and every day of feasting was a communion, and every fasting-day was a day of repentance and alms, and every day of thanksgiving was a day of joy and alms; and religion began all their actions, and prayer consecrated them, and they ended in charity, and were not polluted with design: they despised the world heartily, and pursued after heaven greedily; they knew no ends but to serve God, and to be saved; and had no designs upon their neighbours, but to lead them to God and to felicity; till Satan, full of envy to see such excellent days, mingled covetousness and ambition within the throngs and conventions of the church, and a vice crept into an office; and then the mutual confidence grew less, and so charity was lessened; and heresies crept in, and then faith began to be sullied; and pride crept in, and then men snatched at offices, not for the work, but for the dignity; and then they served themselves more than God and the church; till at last it came to that pass where now it is, that the clergy live lives no better than the laity, and the laity are stooped to imitate the evil customs of strangers and enemies of Christianity; so that we should think religion in a good condition, if that men did offer up to God but the actions of an ordinary, even, and just life, without the scandal and allays of

a great impiety. But because such is the nature of things, that either they grow towards perfection, or decline towards dissolution ; there is no proper way to secure it but by setting its growth forward : for religion hath no station or natural periods ; if it does not grow better, it grows much worse ; not that it always returns the man into scandalous sins, but that it establishes and fixes him in a state of indifference and lukewarmness ; and he is more averse to a state of improvement, and dies in an incurious, ignorant, and unrelenting condition.

THE MORE DEVOUT OBSERVANCE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE,

A PROOF OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

BUT because in the course of holy living, although the duty be regular and constant, yet the sensible relishes and the flowerings of affection, the zeal and the visible expressions, do not always make the same emission ; but sometimes by design, sometimes by order, and sometimes by affection, we are more busy, more entire, and more intent upon the actions of religion : in such cases we are to judge of our growth in grace,—if after every interval of extraordinary piety, the next return be more devout, and more affectionate ;—the labour be more cheerful and more active, and if religion returns oftener, and stays longer in the same expressions, and leaves more satisfaction upon the spirit. Are your communions more frequent ? and, when they are, do you approach nearer to God ? Have you made firmer resolutions, and entertained more hearty purposes of amendment ? Do you love God more dutifully, and your neighbour with a greater charity ? Do you not so easily return to the world as formerly ? Are not you glad when the thing is done ? Do you go to your secular accounts with a more weaned affection than before ? If you communicate well, it is certain that you will still do it better ; if you do not communicate well, every opportunity of doing it is but a new trouble, easily excused, readily omitted ; done because it is necessary, but not because we love it ; and we shall find that such persons, in their old age, do it worst of all. And it was observed by a Spanish confessor, who was also a famous preacher, that in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made upon their death-bed, were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition than all that he had observed them to make in many years before. For so the canes of Egypt, when they newly arise from their bed of mud and slime of Nilus, start up into an equal and continual length, and are interrupted but with few knots, and are strong and beauteous, with great distances and intervals ; but when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramid, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body ; so are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace. At first, when he springs up from his impurity by the waters of baptism and repentance, he grows straight and strong, and suffers but few interruptions of piety ; and his constant courses of religion are but rarely intermitted, till they ascend up to a full age, or towards the end of their life ; then they are weak, and their devotions often intermitted, and their breaches are frequent, and they seek excuses, and labour

for dispensations, and love God and religion less and less,—till their old age, instead of a crown of their virtue and perseverance, ends in levity and unprofitable courses ; light and useless as the tufted feathers upon the cane, every wind can play with it and abuse it, but no man can make it useful. When, therefore, our piety interrupts its greater and more solemn expressions, and, upon the return of the greater offices and bigger solemnities, we find them to come upon our spirits like the wave of a tide, which retired only because it was natural so to do, and yet came farther upon the strand at the next rolling ; when every new confession, every succeeding communion, every time of separation for more solemn and intense prayer is better spent, and more affectionate, leaving a greater relish upon the spirit, and possessing greater portions of our affections, our reason, and our choice ; then we may give God thanks, who hath given us more grace to use that grace, and a blessing to endeavour our duty, and a blessing upon our endeavour.

WATCHFULNESS AGAINST THE LEAST DEGREE OF SIN,

A PROOF OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

CHRIST esteems no sin to be little or contemptible, none fit to be cherished or indulged to. For it is not only inconsistent with the love of God, to entertain any indecency or beginning of a crime, any thing that displeases him ; but he that is grown in grace always remembers how much it cost him to arrive at the state of good things, whither the grace of God hath already brought him : he thinks of his prayers and tears, his restless nights and his daily fears, his late escape and his present danger, the ruins of his former state, and the difficulty and imperfect reparations of his new, his proclivity and aptness to vice, and natural averseness and uneasy inclinations to the strictness of holy living ; and when these are considered truly, they naturally make a man unwilling to entertain any beginnings of a state of life contrary to that which, with so much danger and difficulty, through so many objections and enemies, he hath attained. And the truth is, when a man hath escaped the dangers of his first state of sin, he cannot but be extremely unwilling to return again thither, in which he can never hope for heaven. And so it must be ; for a man must not flatter himself in a small crime, and say, as Lot did, when he begged a reprieve for Zoar, “ Alas ! Lord, is it not a little one, and my soul shall live ? ” And it is not, therefore, to be entertained because it is little ; for it is the more without excuse, if it be little : the temptations to it are not great, the allurements not mighty, the promises not insnaring, the resistance easy ; and a wise man considers it is a greater danger to be overcome by a little sin, than by a great one : a greater danger, I say ; not directly, but accidentally ; not in respect of the crime, but in relation to the person : for he that cannot overcome a small crime, is in a state of infirmity so great that he perishes infallibly, when he is arrested by the sins of a stronger temptation : but he that easily can, and yet will not, he is in love with sin, and courts his danger, that he may at least kiss the apples of paradise, or feast himself with the parings, since he is, by some displeasing instrument, affrighted from glutting him-

self with the forbidden fruit in ruder and bigger instances. But the well-grown Christian is curious of his newly-trimmed soul; and, like a nice person with clean clothes, is careful that no spot or stain sully the virgin whiteness of his robe; whereas another, whose albs of baptism are sullied in many places with the smoke and filth of Sodom and uncleanness, cares not in what paths he treads; and a shower of dirt changes not *his* state, who already lies wallowing in the puddles of impurity. It makes men negligent and easy, when they have an opinion, or certain knowledge, that they are persons extraordinary in nothing, that a little care will not mend them, that another sin cannot make them much worse: but it is a sign of a tender conscience and a reformed spirit, when it is sensible of every alteration, when an idle word is troublesome, when a wandering thought puts the whole spirit upon its guard, when too free a merriment is wiped off with a sigh and a sad thought, and a severe recollection, and a holy prayer. Polycletus was wont to say, "That they had work enough to do, who were to make a curious picture of clay and dirt, when they were to take accounts for the handling of mud and mortar." A man's spirit is naturally careless of baser and uncostly materials; but if a man be to work in gold, then he will save the filings of his dust, and suffer not a grain to perish: and when a man hath laid his foundations in precious stones, he will not build vile matter, stubble, and dirt upon it. So it is in the spirit of a man; if he have built upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and is grown up to a good stature in Christ, he will not easily dishonour his building, or lose his labours, by an incurious entertainment of vanities and little instances of sin; which as they can never satisfy any lust or appetite to sin, so they are like a fly in a box of ointment, or like little follies to a wise man; they are extremely full of dishonour and disparagement, they disarray a man's soul of his virtue, and dishonour him for cockle-shells and baubles, and tempt to a greater folly; which every man, who is grown in the knowledge of Christ, therefore carefully avoids, because he fears a relapse with a fear as great as his hopes of heaven are; and knows that the entertainment of small sins does but entice a man's resolutions to disband; they unravel and untwist his holy purposes, and begin in infirmities, and proceed in folly, and end in death.

ABILITY TO RESIST PRESENT TEMPTATION,

A SIGN OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

BUT as some are active only in the presence of a good object, but remiss and careless for the want of it; so, on the other side, an infant-grace is safe in the absence of a temptation, but falls easily when it is in presence. He, therefore, that would understand if he be grown in grace, may consider if his safety consists only in peace, or in the strength of the Spirit. It is good that we will not seek out opportunities to sin; but are not we too apprehensive of it, when it is presented? or do we not sink under it when it presses us? Can we hold our tapers near the flame, and not suck it in greedily like naphtha or prepared nitre? Or can we, like the children of the captivity, walk in the midst of flames, and not be scorched or consumed?

Many men will not, like Judah, go into highways, and untie the girdles of harlots; but can you reject the importunity of a beauteous and an impetuous lady, as Joseph did? We had need pray that we be not led "into temptation:" that is, not only into the possession, but into the allurements and neighbourhood of it, lest by little and little, our strongest resolutions be untwist, and crack in sunder, like an easy cord severed into single threads; but if we, by the necessity of our lives and manner of living, dwell where a temptation will assault us, then to resist is the sign of a great grace; but such a sign, that without it the grace turns to wantonness, and the man into a beast, and an angel into a devil. R. Moses will not allow a man to be a true penitent, until he hath left all his sin, and in all the like circumstances refuses those temptations, under which formerly he sinned and died; and indeed it may happen, that such a trial only can secure our judgment concerning ourselves. And although to be tried in all the same accidents be not safe, nor always contingent, and in such cases it is sufficient to resist all the temptations we have, and avoid the rest, and decree against all;—yet if it please God we are tempted, as David was by his eyes, or the martyrs by tortures, or Joseph by his wanton mistress, then to stand sure, and to ride upon the temptation like a ship upon a wave, or to stand like a rock in an impetuous storm, that is a sign of a great grace, and of a well-grown Christian.

RESISTANCE OF SUDDEN TEMPTATION,

A PROOF OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

SOME there are, who are firm in all great and foreseen changes, and have laid up in the storehouses of the spirit,—*reason* and *religion*,—arguments and discourses enough to defend them against all violences, and stand at watch so much, that they are safe, where they can consider and deliberate; but there may be something wanting yet; and in the direct line, and in the straight progress to heaven, I call that an infallible sign of a great grace, and indeed the greatest degree of a great grace, when a man is prepared against sudden invasions of the spirit, surreptitious and extemporary assaults. Many a valiant person dares fight a battle, who yet will be timorous and surprised in a midnight alarm, or if he falls into a river. And how many discreet persons are there, who, if you offer them a sin, and give them time to consider, and tell them of it beforehand, will rather die than be perjured, or tell a deliberate lie, or break a promise; who, it may be, tell many sudden lies, and excuse themselves, and break their promises, and yet think themselves safe enough, and sleep without either affrightments or any apprehension of dishonour done to their persons or their religion! Every man is not armed for all sudden arrests of passions. Few men have cast such fetters upon their lusts, and have their passions in so strict confinement, that they may not be overrun with a midnight flood or an unlooked-for inundation. He that does not start, when he is smitten suddenly, is a constant person. And that is it which I intend in this instance; that he is a perfect man, and well grown in grace, who hath so habitual a resolution, and so unliasty and wary a spirit, as

that he decrees upon no act, before he hath considered maturely, and changed the sudden occasion into a sober counsel. David, by chance, spied Bathsheba washing herself; and, being surprised, gave his heart away, before he could consider; and when it was once gone, it was hard to recover it: and sometimes a man is betrayed by a sudden opportunity, and all things fitted for his sin ready at the door; the act stands in all its dress, and will not stay for an answer; and inconsideration is the defence and guard of the sin, and makes that his conscience can the more easily swallow it: what shall the man do then? Unless he be strong by his old strengths, by a great grace, by an habitual virtue, and a sober unmoved spirit,—he falls and dies the death, and hath no new strengths, but such as are to be employed for his recovery; none for his present guard, unless upon the old stock, and if he be a well-grown Christian.

SIN TO BE RESISTED IN ITS BEGINNINGS.

THE next sort of those who are in the state of sin, and yet to be handled gently and with compassion, are those, who entertain themselves with the beginnings and little entrances of sin: which as they are to be more pitied, because they often come by reason of inadvertency, and an unavoidable weakness in many degrees; so they are more to be taken care of, because they are undervalued, and undiscernibly run into inconvenience. When we see a child strike a servant rudely, or jeer a silly person, or wittingly cheat his play-fellow, or talk words light as the skirt of a summer garment; we laugh, and are delighted with the wit and confidence of the boy, and encourage such hopeful beginnings: and in the meantime we consider not, that from these beginnings he shall grow up, till he become a tyrant, an oppressor, a goat, and a traitor. “No man is discerned to be vicious so soon as he is so;” and vices have their infancy and their childhood; and it cannot be expected that in a child’s age should be the vice of a man; that were monstrous, as if he wore a beard in his cradle; “and we do not believe that a serpent’s sting does just then grow, when he strikes us in a vital part;” the venom and the little spear was there, when it first began to creep from his little shell. And little boldnesses and looser words, and wranglings for nuts, and lying for trifles, are of the same proportion to the malice of a child, as impudence, and duels, and injurious lawsuits, and false witness in judgment, and perjuries, are in men. And the case is the same when men enter upon a new stock of any sin: the vice is at first apt to be put out of countenance, and a little thing discourages it, and it amuses the spirit with words, and fantastic images, and cheap instances of sin; and men think themselves safe, because they are as yet safe from laws, and the sin does not as yet outcry the healthful noise of Christ’s loud cryings and intercession with his Father, nor call for thunder or an amazing judgment: but, according to the old saying, “The thorns of Dauphine will never fetch blood, if they do not scratch the first day;” and we shall find that the little indecencies and riflings of our souls, the first openings and disparkings of our virtue, differ only from the state of perdition, as infancy does from old age, as sickness from

death ; it is the entrance into those regions, whither whosoever passes finally, shall lie down and groan with an eternal sorrow. Now in this case it may happen, that a compassion may ruin a man, if it be the pity of an indiscreet mother, and nurse the sin from its weakness to the strength of habit and impudence. The compassion that is to be used to such persons, is the compassion of a physician or a severe tutor : chastise thy infant sin by discipline, and acts of virtue ; and never begin that way, from whence you must return with some trouble and much shame ; or else, if you proceed, you finish your eternal ruin.

He that means to be temperate, and avoid the crime and dishonour of being a drunkard, must not love to partake of the songs, or to bear a part in the foolish scenes of laughter, which distract wisdom, and fright her from the company. And *Lævina*, that was chaster than the elder *Sabines*, and severer than her philosophical guardian, was well instructed in the great lines of honour and cold justice to her husband : but when she gave way to the wanton ointments and looser circumstances of *Baïæ*, and bathed often in *Avernus*, and from thence hurried to the companies and dressings of *Lucrinus*, she quenched her honour, and gave her virtue and her body as a spoil to the follies and intemperance of a young gentleman. For so have I seen the little purls of a spring sweat through the bottom of a bank, and intenerate the stubborn pavement, till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot ; and it was despised, like the descending purls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way, and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand, and to invade the neighbouring gardens ; but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river, and an intolerable mischief. So are the first entrances of sin stopped with the antidotes of a hearty prayer, and checked into sobriety by the eye of a reverend man, or the counsels of a single sermon : but when such beginnings are neglected, and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy as to think any thing evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers and pestilential evils ; they destroy the soul by their abode, who, at their first entry, might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger.

NO MAN FORCED TO SIN.

THERE are some very much to be pitied and assisted, because they are going into hell, and, as matters stand with them, they cannot, or they think they cannot, avoid it. "There are some persons whose life is so wholly in dependence from others, that they sleep when others please, they eat and drink according to their master's appetite or intemperance : they are commanded to love or hate, and are not left free in the very charter and privileges of nature." For suppose the prince or the patron be vicious ; suppose he calls his servants to bathe their souls in the goblets of intemperance ; if he be also imperious, (for such persons love not to be contradicted in their vices,) it is the loss of that man's fortune not to lose his soul ; and it is the servant's excuse, and he esteems it also his glory, that he can tell a merry tale, how his master and himself did swim in drink, till

they both talked like fools, and then did lie down like beasts. There is then no difference, but that the one is the fairest bull, and master of the herd. And how many tenants and relatives are known to have a servile conscience, and to know no affirmation or negation but such as shall serve their landlord's interest! Alas! the poor men live by it, and they must beg their bread, if ever they turn recreant, or shall offer to be honest. There are some trades whose very foundation is laid in the vice of others; and in many others, if a thread of deceit do not quite run through all their negotiations, they decay into the sorrows of beggary; and, therefore, they will support their neighbour's vice, that he may support their trade. And what would you advise those men to do, to whom a false oath is offered to their lips and a dagger at their heart? Their reason is surprised, and their choice is seized upon, and all their consultation is arrested; and if they did not prepare beforehand, and stand armed with religion and perfect resolution, would not any man fall, and think that every good man will say his case is pitiable? Although no temptation is bigger than the grace of God, yet many temptations are greater than our strengths; and we do not live at the rate of a mighty and a victorious grace.

Those persons which cause these vicious necessities upon their brethren, will lie low in hell; but the others will have but small comfort in feeling a lesser damnation.—These men are in a pitiable condition, and are to be helped by the following rules:

1. Let every man consider that he hath two relations to serve, and he stands between God and his master and his nearest relative; and in such cases it comes to be disputed whether interest be preferred, which of the persons is to be displeased, God or my master, God or my prince, God or my friend. If we be servants of the man, remember also that I am a servant of God: add to this, that if my present service to the man be a slavery in me, and a tyranny in him, yet God's service is a noble freedom. And Apollonius said well, "It was for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak the truth." "If you be freed by the blood of the Son of God, then you are free indeed:" and then consider how dishonourable it is to lie, to the displeasure of God, and only to please your fellow servant. The difference here is so great, that it might be sufficient only to consider the antithesis. Did the man make you what you are? Did he pay his blood for you, to save you from death? Does he keep you from sickness? True: you eat at his table; but they are God's provisions that he and you feed of. Can your master free you from a fever, when you have drunk yourself into it; and restore your innocence, when you have forsworn yourself for his interest? Is the charge reasonable? He gives you meat and drink, for which you do him service: but is not he a tyrant and an usurper, an oppressor and an extortioner, if he will force thee to give thy soul for him, to sell thy soul for old shoes and broken bread? But when thou art to make thy accounts of eternity, will it be taken for an answer, My patron or my governor, my prince or my master, forced me to it? or, if it will not, will he undertake a portion of thy flames? or, if that may not be, will it be, in the midst of all thy torments, any ease to thy sorrows to remember all the rewards and clothes, all the money and civilities, all the cheerful looks and familiarity and fellowship of vices, which, in your lifetime, made your spirit so gay and easy? It will, in the eternal loads of sorrow, add a duplicate of groans and indignation, when it

shall be remembered for how base and trifling an interest, and upon what weak principles, we fell sick and died eternally.

2. The next advice to persons thus tempted is, that they would learn to separate duty from mistaken interest, and let them be both served in their just proportions, when we have learned to make a difference. A wife is bound to her husband in all his just designs, and in all noble usages and Christian comportments: but a wife is no more bound to pursue her husband's vicious hatreds, than to serve and promote his unlawful and wandering loves. It is not always a part of duty to think the same propositions, or to curse the same persons, or to wish him success in unjust designs: and yet the sadness of it is, that a good woman is easily tempted to believe the cause to be just; and when her affection hath forced her judgment, her judgment for ever after shall carry the affection to all its erring and abused determinations. A friend is turned a flatterer, if he does not know that the limits of friendship extend no farther than the pale and inclosures of reason and religion. No master puts it into his covenant that his servant shall be drunk with him, or give in evidence in his master's cause, according to his master's scrolls: and, therefore, it is besides and against the duty of a servant to sin by that authority; it is as if he should set mules to keep his sheep, or make his dogs to carry burdens; it is besides their nature and design. And if any person falls under so tyrannical relation, let him consider how hard a master he serves, where the devil gets the employment, and shame is his entertainment, and sin is his work, and hell is his wages. Take, therefore, the counsel of the son of Sirach: "Accept no person against thy soul, and let not the reverence of any man cause thee to fall."

3. When passion mingles with duty, and is a necessary instrument of serving God, let not passion run its own course, and pass on to liberty, and thence to license and dissolution; but let no more of it be entertained than will just do the work. For no zeal of duty will warrant a violent passion to prevaricate a duty. I have seen some officers of war, in passion and zeal of their duty, have made no scruple to command a soldier with a dialect of cursing and accents of swearing, and pretended they could not else speak words effective enough, and of sufficient authority: and a man may be easily overtaken in the issues of his government, while his authority serves itself with passion: if he be not curious in his measures, his passion also will serve itself upon the authority, and overrule the ruler.

4. Let every such tempted person remember, that all evil comes from ourselves, and not from others; and, therefore, all pretences and prejudices, all commands and temptations, all opinions and necessities, are but instances of our weakness, and arguments of our folly; for, unless we listed, no man can make us drink beyond our measures; and if I tell a lie for my master's or my friend's advantage, it is because I prefer a little end of money or flattery before my honour and my innocence. They are huge follies which go up and down in the mouths and heads of men. "He that knows not how to dissemble, knows not how to reign:" He that will not do as his company does, must go out of the world, and quit all society of men. We create necessities of our own, and then think we have reason to serve their importunity. "The place we live in makes us expensive, the state of life I have chosen renders me ambitious, my age makes me angry

or lustful, proud or peevish." These are nothing else but resolutions never to mend as long as we can have excuses for our follies, and until we can cozen ourselves no more. There is no such thing as necessity for a prince to dissemble, or for a servant to lie, or for a friend to flatter, for a civil person and a sociable to be drunk : we cozen ourselves with thinking the fault is so much derivative from others, till the smart and the shame falls upon ourselves, and covers our heads with sorrow. And unless this gap be stopped, and that we build our duty upon our own bottoms, as supported with the grace of God, there is no vice but may find a patron,—and no age, or relation or state of life, but will be an engagement to sin ; and we shall think it necessary to be lustful in our youth, and revengeful in our manhood, and covetous in our old age ; and we shall perceive that every state of men, and every trade and profession, lives upon the vices of others, or upon their miseries, and, therefore, they will think it necessary to promote or to wish it. If men were temperate, physicians would be poor ; and unless some princes were ambitious, or others injurious, there would be no employment for soldiers. The vintner's retail supports the merchant's trade, and it is a vice that supports the vintner's retail ; and if all men were wise and sober persons, we should have fewer beggars and fewer rich. And if our lawgivers should imitate Demades of Athens, who condemned a man that lived by selling things belonging to funerals, as supposing he could not choose but wish the death of men, by whose dying he got his living, we should find most men accounted criminals, because vice is so involved in the affairs of the world, that it is made the support of many trades, and the business of great multitudes of men. Certainly from hence it is that iniquity does so much abound ; and unless we state our questions right, and perceive the evil to be designed only from ourselves, and that no such pretence shall keep off the punishment or the shame from ourselves, we shall fall into a state which is only capable of compassion, because it is irrecoverable ; and then we shall be infinitely miserable, when we can only receive a useless and ineffective pity. Whatsoever is necessary cannot be avoided ; he, therefore, that shall say, he cannot avoid his sin, is out of the mercies of this text : they who are appointed guides and physicians of souls, cannot, to any purpose, do their offices of pity. It is necessary that we serve God, and do our duty, and secure the interest of our souls, and be as careful to preserve our relations to God as to our friend or prince. But if it can be necessary for any man, in any condition, to sin, it is also necessary for that man to perish.

CASE OF SINGLE ACTS OF SIN INTERRUPTING THE COURSE OF A HOLY LIFE.

THE last sort of them that sin, and yet are to be treated with compassion, is of them that interrupt the course of an honest life with single acts of sin, stepping aside and "starting like a broken bow ;" whose resolution stands fair, and their hearts are towards God, and they sojourn in religion or rather dwell there ; but that, like evil husbands, they go abroad, and enter into places of dishonour and unthriftiness. Such as these all stories

remember with a sad character ; and every narrative concerning David, which would end in honour and fair report, is sullied with the remembrance of Bathsheba and the Holy Ghost hath called him “ a man after God’s own leart, save in the matter of Uriah :” there, indeed, he was a man after his own heart ; even then, when his reason was stolen from him by passion, and his religion was sullied by the beauties of a fair woman. I wish we lived in an age, in which the people were to be treated with concerning renouncing the single actions of sin, and the seldom interruptions of piety. —I do not mean that a man’s life can be as pure as the sun, or the rays of celestial Jerusalem ; but like the moon, in which there are spots, but they are no deformity ; a lessening only and an abatement of light, no cloud to hinder and draw a veil before its face, but sometimes it is not so serene and bright as at other times. Every man hath his indiscretions and infirmities, his arrests and sudden incursions, his neighbourhoods and semblances of sin, his little violences to reason, and peevish melancholy, and humorous, fantastic discourses ; unaptness to a devout prayer, his fondness to judge favourably in his own cases, little deceptions, and voluntary and involuntary cozenages, ignorances, and inadvertencies, careless hours, and unwatchful seasons. But no good man ever commits one act of adultery ; no godly man will, at any time, be drunk ; or if he be, he ceases to be a godly man, and is run into the confines of death, and is sick at heart, and may die of the sickness, die eternally. This happens more frequently in persons of an infant-piety, when the virtue is not corroborated by a long abode, and a confirmed resolution, and a usual victory, and a triumphant grace ; and the longer we are accustomed to piety, the more infrequent will be the little breaches of folly, and a returning to sin. But as the needle of a compass, when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first addresses waves on either side and seems indifferent in his courtship of the rising or declining sun ; and when it seems first determined to the north, stands a while trembling, as if it suffered inconvenience in the first fruition of its desires, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after first a great variety of motion and then an undisturbed posture ; so is the piety and so is the conversion of a man, wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection : and at first our choices are wavering ; convinced by the grace of God, and yet not persuaded ; and then persuaded, but not resolved ; and then resolved, but deferring to begin ; and then beginning, but as all beginnings are in weakness and uncertainty ; and we fly out often into huge indiscretions, and look back to Sodom, and long to return to Egypt : and when the storm is quite over, we find little babbings and unevennesses upon the face of the waters, we often weaken our own purposes by the returns of sin ; and we do not call ourselves conquerors, till by the long possession of virtues it is a strange and unusual, and, therefore, an uneasy and unpleasant thing, to act a crime.

IMAGINATIONS OF SIN DANGEROUS.

HE that hath passed many stages of a good life, to prevent his being tempted to a single sin. must be very careful that he never entertain the

spirit with the remembrances of his past sin, nor amuse it with the fantastic apprehensions of the present. When the Israelites fancied the rapidness and relish of the flesh-pots, they longed to taste and to return.

So when a Libyan tiger, drawn from his wilder foragings, is shut up, and taught to eat civil meat, and suffer the authority of a man, he sits down tamely in his prison, and pays to his keeper fear and reverence for his meat : but if he chance to come again, and taste a draught of warm blood, he presently leaps into his natural cruelty. He scarce abstains from eating those hands, that brought him discipline and food. So is the nature of a man made tame and gentle by the grace of God, and reduced to reason, and kept in awe by religion and laws, and, by an awful virtue, is taught to forget those alluring and sottish relishes of sin : but if he diverts from his path, and snatches handfuls from the wanton vineyards, and remembers the lasciviousness of his unwholesome food, that pleased his childish palate ; then he grows sick again, and hungry after unwholesome diet, and longs for the apples of Sodom. A man must walk through the world without eyes or ears, fancy or appetite, but such as are created and sanctified by the grace of God ; and being once made a new man, he must serve all the needs of nature by the appetites and faculties of grace ; nature must be wholly a servant : and we must so look towards the deliciousness of our religion and the ravishments of heaven, that our memory must be for ever useless to the affairs and perceptions of sin. We cannot stand, we cannot live, unless we be curious and watchful in this particular.

By these and all other arts of the Spirit, if we stand upon our guard, never indulging to ourselves one sin because it is but one, as knowing that one sin brought in death upon all the world, and one sin brought slavery upon the posterity of Cham ; and always fearing lest death surprise us in that one sin, we shall, by the grace of God, either not need or else easily perceive the effects and blessings of that compassion which God reserves, in the secrets of his mercy, for such persons whom his grace hath ordained and disposed with excellent dispositions unto life eternal.

THE FOOLISH EXCHANGE.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?—*Matt.* xvi. 26.

WHEN the eternal mercy of God had decreed to rescue mankind from misery and infelicity, and so triumphed over his own justice ; the excellent wisdom of God resolved to do it, in ways contradictory to the appetites and designs of man, that it also might triumph over our weaknesses and imperfect conceptions. So God decreed to glorify his mercy by curing our sins, and to exalt his wisdom by the reproof of our ignorance, and the representing upon what weak and false principles we had built our hopes and expectations of felicity ; pleasure and profit, victory over our enemies, riches and pompous honours, power and revenge, desires according to sensual

appetites, and prosecutions violent and passionate of those appetites, health and long life, free from trouble, without poverty or persecution.

These are the measures of good and evil, the object of our hopes and fears, the securing our content, and the portion of this world ; and for the other, let it be as it may. But the blessed Jesus,—having made revelations of an immortal duration, of another world, and of a strange restitution to it, even by the resurrection of the body, and a new investiture of the soul with the same upper garment, clarified and made pure, so as no fuller on earth can whiten it ;—hath also preached a new philosophy, hath cancelled all the old principles, reduced the appetites of sense to the discourses of reason, and heightened reason to the sublimities of the Spirit, teaching us abstractions and immaterial conceptions, giving us new eyes, and new objects, and new proportions : for now sensual pleasures are not delightful, riches are dross, honours are nothing but the appendages of virtue, and in relation to it are to receive their account. But now if you would enjoy life, you must die ; if you would be at ease, you must take up Christ's cross, and conform to his sufferings ; if you would " save your life," you must " lose it ;" and if you would be rich, you must abound in good works, you must be " poor in spirit," and despise the world, and be rich unto God : for whatsoever is contrary to the purchases and affections of this world, is an endearment of our hopes in the world to come. And, therefore, he having stated the question so, that either we must quit this world or the other ; our affections, I mean, and adherences to this, or our interest and hopes of the other : the choice is rendered very easy by the words of my text, because the distance is not less than infinite, and the comparison hath terms of a vast difference ; heaven and hell, eternity and a moment, vanity and real felicity, life and death eternal, all that can be hoped for and all that can be feared ; these are the terms of our choice : and if a man have his wits about him, and be not drunk with sensuality and senselessness, he need not much to dispute before he pass the sentence. For nothing can be given to us to recompense the loss of heaven ; and if our souls be lost, there is nothing remaining to us whereby we can be happy.

'What shall it profit a man?' or, 'What shall a man give?' Is there any exchange for a man's soul? The question is an emphatic expression of the negative. Nothing can be given for 'a price,' to satisfy for its loss. The blood of the Son of God was given to recover it to God ; and when our souls were forfeit to him, nothing less than the life and passion of God and man could pay the price, I say, to God ; who yet was not concerned in the loss, save only that such was his goodness, that it pitied him to see his creature lost. But to us what shall be the exchange? what can make us recompense when we have lost our own souls, and are lost in a miserable eternity? What can then recompense us? Not all the world, nor ten thousand worlds: and of this that miserable man whose soul is lost, is the best judge. For the question hath potential signification, that is, Suppose a man ready to die, condemned to the sentence of a horrid death, heightened with the circumstances of trembling and amazement, "what would he give" to save his life? "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life." And this turned to a proverb among the Jews; for so the last words of the text are, "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul;" which proverb being usually meant concerning a temporal death, and intended to represent the sadnesses of a

condemned person, our blessed Saviour fits to his own purpose, and translates to the signification of death eternal, which he first revealed clearly to the world. And because no interest of the world can make a man a recompense for his life, because to lose that makes him incapable of enjoying the exchange, (and he were a strange fool, who, having no design upon immortality or virtue, should be willing to be hanged for a thousand pounds 'per annum,') this argument increases infinitely in the purpose of our blessed Saviour; and to gain the world, and to lose our souls in the Christian sense, is infinitely more madness, and a worse exchange, than when our souls signify nothing but a temporal life. And although possibly the indefinite hopes of Elysium, or an honourable name, might tempt some hardy persons to leave this world, hoping for a better condition, even among the heathens; yet no excuse will acquit a Christian from madness, if, for the purchase of this world, he lose his eternity.

Here, then, first, we will consider the propositions of the exchange, the "world and a man's soul," by way of supposition, supposing all that is propounded were obtained, "the whole world." Secondly, we will consider, what is likely to be obtained "really" and "indeed" of the world, and what are really the miseries of a lost soul. For it is propounded in the text, by way of supposition, "if a man should gain the world," which no man ever did nor ever can; and he that gets most, gets too little to be exchanged for a temporal life. And, thirdly, I shall apply it to your practice, and make material considerations.

1. First, then suppose a man gets all the world, what is it that he gets? It is a bubble and a fantasm and hath no reality beyond a present transient use; a thing that is impossible to be enjoyed, because its fruits and usages are transmitted to us by parts and by succession. He that hath all the world, (if we can suppose such a man,) cannot have a dish of fresh summer-fruits in the midst of winter, not so much as a green fig: and very much of its possessions is so hid, so fugacious, and of so uncertain purchase, that it is like the riches of the sea to the lord of the shore; all the fish and wealth within all its hollowness are his, but he is never the better for what he cannot get: all the shell-fishes that produce pearl, produce them not for him: and the bowels of the earth shall hide her treasures in undiscovered retirements: so that it will signify as much to this great purchaser to be entitled to an inheritance in the upper region of the air; he is so far from possessing all its riches, that he does not so much as know of them, nor understand the philosophy of her minerals.

2. I consider, that he that is the greatest possessor in the world enjoys its best and most noble parts, and those which are of most excellent perfection, but in common with the inferior persons, and the most despicable of his kingdom. Can the greatest prince enclose the sun, and set one little star in his cabinet for his own use, or secure to himself the gentle and benign influences of any one constellation? Are not his subjects' fields bedewed with the same showers that water his gardens of pleasure?

Nay, those things which he esteems his ornament, and the singularity of his possessions, are they not of more use to others than to himself? For suppose his garments splendid and shining, like the robe of a cherub or the clothing of the fields, all that he that wears them enjoys, is, that they keep him warm, and clean, and modest; and all this is done by clean and less pompous vestments; and the beauty of them, which distinguishes him

from others, is made to please the eyes of the beholders ; and he is like a fair bird, or the meretricious painting of a wanton woman, made wholly to be looked on, that is, to be enjoyed by every one but himself ; and the fairest face and the sparkling eye cannot perceive or enjoy their own beauties but by reflection. It is I that am pleased with beholding his gayety ; and the gay man, in his greatest bravery, is only pleased because I am pleased with the sight ; so borrowing his little and imaginary complacency from the delight that I have, not from any inherency of his own possession.

The poorest artisan of Rome, walking in Cæsar's gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their lord : and although it may be he was put to gather fruits to eat from another place, yet his other senses were delighted equally with Cæsar's : the birds made him as good music, the flowers gave him as sweet smells ; he there sucked as good air, and delighted in the beauty and order of the place, for the same reason and upon the same perception as the prince himself ; save only that Cæsar paid, for all that pleasure, vast sums of money, the blood and treasure of a province, which the poor man had for nothing.

3. Suppose a man lord of all the world (for still we are but in supposition) ; yet since every thing is received, not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver, it signifies very little as to our content or to the riches of our possession. If any man should give to a lion a fair meadow full of hay, or a thousand quince trees ; or should give to the goodly bull, the master and the fairest of the whole herd, a thousand fair stags ; if a man should present to a child a ship laden with Persian carpets, and the ingredients of the rich scarlet ; all these, being disproportionate either to the appetite or to the understanding, could add nothing of content, and might declare the freeness of the presenter, but they upbraid the incapacity of the receiver. And so it does if God should give the whole world to any man. He knows not what to do with it ; he can use no more but according to the capacities of a man ; he can use nothing but meat, and drink, and clothes ; and infinite riches, that can give him changes of raiment every day and a full table, do but give him a clean trencher every bit he eats ; it signifies no more but wantonness and variety, to the same, not to any new purposes. He to whom the world can be given to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him : he needs the understanding of an angel, to take the accounts of his estate ; he had need have a stomach like fire or the grave, for else he can eat no more than one of his healthful subjects ; and unless he hath an eye like the sun, and a motion like that of a thought, and a bulk as big as one of the orbs of heaven, the pleasures of his eye can be no greater than to behold the beauty of a little prospect from a hill, or to look upon the heap of gold packed up in a little room, or to dote upon a cabinet of jewels, better than which there is no man that sees at all, but sees every day. For, not to name the beauties and sparkling diamonds of heaven, a man's or a woman's or a hawk's eye, is more beauteous and excellent than all the jewels of his crown. And when we remember that a beast, who hath quicker senses than a man, yet hath not so great delight in the fruition of any object, because he wants understanding and the power to make reflex acts upon his perception ; it will follow, that understanding and knowledge is the greatest instrument of pleasure, and he that is most knowing, hath a capacity to become happy,

which a less knowing prince, or a rich person, hath not ; and in this only a man's capacity is capable of enlargement. But then, although they only have power to relish any pleasure rightly, who rightly understand the nature, and degrees, and essences, and ends of things ; yet they that do so, understand also the vanity and the unsatisfyingness of the things of this world, so that the relish, which could not be great but in a great understanding, appears contemptible, because its vanity appears at the same time ; the understanding sees all, and sees through it.

4. The greatest vanity of this world is remarkable in this, that all its joys summed up together are not big enough to counterpoise the evil of one sharp disease, or to allay a sorrow. For imagine a man great in his dominion as Cyrus, rich as Solomon, victorious as David, beloved like Titus, learned as Trismegist, powerful as all the Roman greatness ; all this, and the results of all this, give him no more pleasure in the midst of a fever or the tortures of the stone, than if he were only lord of a little dish, and a dishful of fountain water. Indeed the excellency of a holy conscience is a comfort and a magazine of joy, so great, that it sweetens the most bitter potion of the world, and makes tortures and death, not only tolerable, but amiable ; and, therefore, to part with this, whose excellency is so great, for the world, that is of so inconsiderable a worth, as not to have in it recompense enough for the sorrows of a sharp disease, is a bargain fit to be made by none but fools and madmen. Antiochus Epiphanes, and Herod the Great, and his grandchild, Agrippa, were sad instances of this great truth ; to every of which it happened, that the grandeur of their fortune, the greatness of their possessions, and the increase of their estate, disappeared and expired like camphire, at their arrest by those several sharp diseases, which covered their heads with cypress, and hid their crowns in an inglorious grave.

For what can all the world minister to a sick person, if it represents all the spoils of nature, and the choicest delicacies of land and sea ? Alas ! his appetite is lost, and to see a pebble-stone is more pleasing to him : for he can look upon that without loathing, but not so upon the most delicious fare that ever made famous the Roman luxury. Perfumes make his head ache ; if you load him with jewels, you press him with a burden as troublesome as his grave-stone : and what pleasure is in all those possessions that cannot make his pillow easy, nor tame the rebellion of a tumultuous humour, nor restore the use of a withered hand, or straighten a crooked finger ? Vain is the hope of that man, whose soul rests upon vanity and such unprofitable possessions.

5. Suppose a man lord of all this world, a universal monarch, as some princes have lately designed ; all that cannot minister content to him ; not that content which a poor contemplative man, by the strength of Christian philosophy, and the support of a very small fortune, daily does enjoy. All his power and greatness cannot command the sea to overflow his shores, or to stay from retiring to the opposite strand : it cannot make his children dutiful or wise. And though the world admired at the greatness of Philip the Second's fortune, in the accession of Portugal and the East Indies to his principalities, yet this could not allay the infelicity of his family, and the unhandsoneness of his condition, in having a proud, and indiscreet, and a vicious young prince, likely to inherit all his greatness. And if nothing appears in the face of such a fortune to tell all the world that it is spotted

and imperfect ; yet there is, in all conditions of the world, such weariness and tediousness of the spirits, that a man is ever more pleased with hopes of going off from the present, than in dwelling upon that condition, which, it may be, others admire and think beauteous, but none knoweth the smart of it but he that drank off the little pleasure, and felt the ill relish of the appendage. How many kings have groaned under the burden of their crowns, and have sunk down and died ? How many have quitted their pompous cares, and retired into private lives, there to enjoy the pleasures of philosophy and religion, which their thrones denied !

And if we consider the supposition of the text, the thing will demonstrate itself. For he who can be supposed the owner and purchaser of the whole world, must either be a king or a private person. A private person can hardly be supposed to be the man ; for if he be subject to another, how can he be lord of the whole world ? But if he be a king, it is certain that his cares are greater than any man's, his fears are bigger, his evils mountainous, the accidents that discompose him are more frequent, and sometimes intolerable ; and of all his great possessions he hath not the greatest use and benefit ; but they are like a great harvest, which more labourers must bring in, and more must eat of ; only he is the centre of all the cares, and they fix upon him, but the profits run out to all the lines of the circle, to all that are about him, whose good is therefore greater than the good of the prince, because what they enjoy is the purchase of the prince's care ; and so they feed upon his cost.

Servants live the best lives, for their care is single, only how to please their lord ; but all the burden of a troublesome providence and ministration makes the outside pompous and more full of ceremony, but intricates the condition and disturbs the quiet of the great possessor.

And imagine a person as blessed as can be supposed upon the stock of worldly interest ; when all his accounts are cast up, he differs nothing from his subjects or his servants but in mere circumstance, nothing of reality or substance. He hath more to wait at his tables, or persons of higher rank to do the meanest offices ; more ceremonies of address, a fairer escutcheon, louder titles : but can this multitude of dishes make him have a good stomach, or does not satiety cloy it ? when his high diet is such, that he is not capable of being feasted, and knows not the frequent delights and oftener possibilities a poor man hath of being refreshed, while not only his labour makes hunger, and so makes his meat delicate (and then it cannot be ill fare, let it be what it will) ; but also his provision is such, that every little addition is a direct feast to him, while the greatest owner of the world, giving to himself the utmost of his desires hath nothing left beyond his ordinary, to become the entertainment of his festival day, but more loads of the same meat. And then let him consider how much of felicity can this condition contribute to him, in which he is not farther gone beyond a person of a little fortune in the greatness of his possession, than he is fallen short in the pleasures and possibility of their enjoyment.

And that is a sad condition, when, like Midas, all that the man touches shall turn to gold : and his is no better, to whom a perpetual full table, not recreated with fasting, not made pleasant with intervening scarcity, ministers no more good than a heap of gold does ; that is, he hath no benefit of it, save the beholding of it with his eyes. Cannot a man quench his thirst as well out of an urn or chalice as out of a whole river ? It is an

ambitious thirst, and a pride of draught, that had rather lay his mouth to Euphrates than to a petty goblet; but if he had rather, it adds not so much to his content as to his danger and his vanity.

For so have I heard of persons whom the river hath swept away, together with the turf they pressed, when they stooped to drown their pride rather than their thirst.

6. But this supposition hath a lessening term. If a man could be born heir of all the world, it were something; but no man ever was so, except him only who enjoyed the least of it, the Son of Man, that had not where to lay his head.' But in the supposition it is, "If a man could gain the whole world," which supposes labour and sorrow, trouble and expense, venture and hazard, and so much time expired in its acquist and purchase, that, besides the possession is not secured to us for a term of life, so our lives are almost expired before we become estated in our purchases. And, indeed, it is a sad thing to see an ambitious or a covetous person make his life unpleasant, troublesome and vexatious, to grasp a power bigger than himself, to fight for it with infinite hazards of his life, so that it is a thousand to one but he perishes in the attempt, and gets nothing at all but an untimely grave, a reproachful memory, and an early damnation. But suppose he gets a victory, and that the unhappy party is put to begin a new game; then to see the fears, the watchfulness, the diligence, the laborious arts to secure a possession, lest the desperate party should recover a desperate game. And suppose this, with a new stock of labours, danger, and expense, be seconded by a new success; then to look upon the new emergencies, and troubles, and discontents, among his friends, about parting the spoil; the envies, the jealousies, the slanders, the underminings, and the perpetual insecurity of his condition: all this, I say, is to see a man take infinite pains to make himself miserable. But if he will be so unlearned as to call this gallantry or a splendid fortune; yet by this time, when he remembers he hath certainly spent much of his time in trouble, and how long he shall enjoy this he is still uncertain; he is not certain of a month; and suppose it be seven years, yet when he comes to die, and cast up his accounts, and shall find nothing remaining but a sad remembrance of evils and troubles past, and expectation of worse, infinitely worse, he must acknowledge himself convinced, that to gain all this world is a fortune not worth the labour, and the dangers, the fears and transportations of passions, though the soul's loss be not considered in the bargain.

II. But I told you all this while that this is but a supposition still, the putting of a case, or like a fiction of law; nothing real. For if we consider, in the second place, how much every man is likely to get really, and how much it is possible for any man to get, we shall find the account far shorter yet, and the purchase most trifling and inconsiderable. For, first, the world is at the same time enjoyed by all its inhabitants, and the same portion of it by several persons in their several capacities. A prince enjoys his whole kingdom, not as all his people enjoy it, but in the manner of a prince; the subject in the manner of subjects. The prince hath certain regalia beyond the rest; but the feudal right of subjects does them more emolument, and the regalia does the prince more honour: and those that hold the fees in subordinate right, transmit it also to their tenants, beneficiaries, and dependents, to public uses, to charity, and hospitality; all which is a lessening of the lord's possessions, and a cutting his river into

little streams, not that himself alone, but that all his relatives, may drink to be refreshed. Thus the well where the woman of Samaria sat, was Jacob's well, and he drank of it; but so did his wives, and his children, and his cattle. So that what we call ours, is really ours but for our portion of expense and use; we have so little of it, that our servants have far more; and that which is ours, is nothing but the title, and the care, and the trouble of securing and dispensing; save only that God whose stewards we all are, will call such owners (as they are pleased to call themselves) to strict accounts for their disbursements. And by this account, the possession or dominion is but a word, and serves a fancy, or a passion, or a vice, but no real end of nature.

It is the use and spending it that makes a man, to all real purposes of nature, to be the owner of it; and in this the lord and master hath but a share.

2. But, secondly, consider how far short of the whole world the greatest prince that ever reigned did come. Alexander, that wept because he had no more worlds to conquer, was, in his knowledge, deceived and brutish as in his passion: he over-ran much of Asia; but he could never pass the Ganges, and never thrust his sword in the bowels of Europe, and knew nothing of America. And "the whole world," began to have an appropriate sense; and was rather put to the Roman greatness, as an honourable appellation, than did signify that they were lords of the world, who never went beyond Persia, Egypt, or Britain.

But why do I talk of great things in this question of the exchange of the soul for the world? Because it is a real bargain which many men (too many, God knows,) do make, we must consider it as applicable to practice.

Every man that loses his soul for the purchase of the world, must not look to have the portion of a king. How few men are princes; and of those that are not born so, how seldom instances are found in story of persons, that, by their industry, became so! But we must come far lower yet. Thousands there are that damn themselves; and yet their purchase, at long-running, and after a base and weary life spent, is but five hundred pounds a year; nay, it may be, they only cozen an easy person out of a good estate, and pay for it at an easy rate, which they obtain by lying, by drinking, by flattery, by force; and the gain is nothing but a thousand pound in the whole, or, it may be, nothing but a convenience. Nay, how many men hazard their salvation for an acre of ground, for twenty pounds, to please a master, to get a small and a kind usage from a superior! These men get but little, though they did not give so much for it: so little, that Epictetus thought the purchase dear enough, though you paid nothing for it but flattery and observance: "observance was the price of his meal:" and he paid too dear for one that gave his birthright for it; but he that exchanges his soul for it, knows not the vanity of his purchase nor the value of his loss. He that gains the purchase and spoil of a kingdom, hath got that, which to all, that are placed in heaven, or to a man that were seated in the paths of the sun, seems but like a spot in an eye, or a mathematical point, so without vastness, that it seems to be without dimensions. But he whose purchase is but his neighbour's field, or a few unjust acres, hath got that which is inconsiderable, below the notice and description of the map: for by such hieroglyphical representments, Socrates chid the vanity of a proud Athenian.

3. Although these premises may suffice to show that the supposed purchase is but vain, and that all which men use really to obtain, is less than trifles; yet even the possession of it, whatsoever it be, is not mere and unmixed, but allayed with sorrow and uneasiness; the gain hath but enlarged his appetite, and, like a draught to a hydropic person, hath enraged his thirst; and still that which he hath not, is infinitely bigger than what he hath, since the first enlargement of his purchase was not to satisfy necessity, but his passion, his lust or his avarice, his pride or his revenge.

These things cease not by their fuel; but their flames grow bigger, and the capacities are stretched, and they want more than they did at first. For who wants most, he that wants five pounds, or he that wants five thousand?

And supposing a man naturally supported and provided for, in the dispensations of nature there is no difference, but that the poor hath enough to fill his belly, and the rich man can never have enough to fill his eye.

The poor man's wants are no greater than what may be supplied by charity; and the rich man's wants are so big that none but princes can relieve them; and they are left to all the temptations of great vices and huge cares to make their reparations.

If the greatness of the world's possessions produce such fruits, vexation, and care, and want; the ambitious requiring of great estates is but like the selling of a fountain to buy a fever, a parting with content to buy necessity, and the purchase of an unhandsome condition at the price of infelicity.

4. He that enjoys a great portion of this world, hath most commonly the alloy of some great cross, which, although sometimes God designs in mercy, to wean his affections from the world, and for the abstracting them from sordid adherences and cohabitation, to make his eyes like stars, to fix them in the orbs of heaven and the regions of felicity, yet they are an inseparable appendant and condition of humanity. Solomon observed the vanity of some persons, that heaped up great riches for their heirs, and yet "knew not whether a wise man or a fool should possess them: this is a great evil under the sun." And if we observe the great crosses many times God permits in great families, as discontent in marriages, artificial or natural bastardies, a society of man and wife like the conjunction of two politics, full of state, and ceremony, and design, but empty of those sweet caresses; and natural hearty complications and endearments, usual in meaner and innocent persons; the perpetual sickness, fulness of diet, fear of dying, the abuse of flatterers, the trouble and noise of company, the tedious officiousness of impertinent and ceremonious visits, the declension of estate, the sadness of spirit, the notoriousness of those dishonours which the meanness of lower persons conceals, but their eminency makes as visible as the spots in the moon's face; we shall find him to be most happy that hath most of wisdom and least of the world, because he only hath the least danger and the most security.

5. And lastly, his soul so gets nothing that wins all this world, if he loses his soul, that it is ten to one but he that gets the one, therefore shall lose the other; for to a great and opulent fortune, sin is so adherent and insinuating, that it comes to him in the nature of civility. It is a sad sight to see a great personage undertake an action passionately and upon great interest; and let him manage it as indiscreetly, let the whole design be unjust, let it be acted with all the malice and impotency in the world, he shall have enow to tell him that he proceeds wisely enough, to be servants

of his interest, and promoters of his sin, instruments of his malice and actors of revenge. But which of all his relatives shall dare to tell him of his indiscretion, of his rage, and of his folly? He had need be a bold man and a severe person that shall tell him of his danger, and that he is in a direct progress towards hell. And indeed such personages have been so long nourished up in softness, flattery, and effeminacy, that too often themselves are impatient of a monitor, and think the charity and duty of a modest reprehension to be a rudeness and incivility. That prince is a wise man that loves to have it otherwise; and certainly, it is a strange civility and dutifulness in friends and relatives, to suffer him to go to hell uncontrolled, rather than to seem unmannerly towards a great sinner. But, certainly, this is none of the least infelicities of them who are lords of the world, and masters of great possessions.

I omit to speak of the habitual intemperance which is too commonly annexed to festival and delicious tables, where there is no other measure or restraint upon the appetite, but its fulness and satiety, and when it cannot or dare not eat more. Oftentimes it happens, that the intemperance of a poor table is more temperate and hath less of luxury in it than the temperance of a rich. To this are consequent all the evil accidents and effects of fulness, pride, lust, wantonness, softness of disposition, and dissolution of manners, huge talking, imperiousness, despite and contempt of poor persons; and, at the best, it is a great temptation for a man to have in his power whatsoever he can have in his sensual desires. Who then shall check his voracity, or calm his revenge, or allay his pride, or mortify his lust, or humble his spirit? It is like as when a lustful young and tempted person lives perpetually with his amorous and delicious mistress: if he escapes burning that is inflamed from within and set on fire from without, it is a greater miracle than the escaping from the flames of the furnace by the three children of the captivity. And just such a thing is the possession of the world; it furnishes us with abilities to sin and opportunities of ruin, and it makes us to dwell with poisons, and dangers, and enemies.

And although the grace of God is sufficient to great personages and masters of the world, and that it is possible for a young man to be tied upon a bed of flowers, and fastened by the arms and band of a courtesan, and tempted wantonly, and yet to escape the danger and the crime, and to triumph gloriously; (for so St Jerome reports of a son of the king of Nicomedia;) and riches and a free fortune are designed by God to be a mercy and an opportunity of doing noble things, and excellent charity, and exact justice, and to protect innocence, and to defend oppressed people: yet it is a mercy mixed with much danger: yea, it is like the present of a whole vintage to a man in a hectic fever; he will be shrewdly tempted to drink of it, and, if he does, he is inflamed, and may chance to die with the kindness. Happy are those persons who use the world, and abuse it not; who possess a part of it, and love it for no other ends but for necessities of nature, and conveniences of person, and discharge of all their duty and offices of religion, and charity to Christ and all Christ's members. But since he that hath all the world cannot command nature to do him one office extraordinary, and enjoys the best part but in common with the poorest man in the world, and can use no more of it but according to a limited and a very narrow capacity; and whatsoever he can use or possess, cannot outweigh the present pressure of a sharp disease, nor can it at all give him content, without which there can

be nothing of felicity ; since a prince, in the matter of using the world, differs nothing from his subjects, but in mere accidents and circumstances, and yet these very many trifling differences are not to be obtained but by so much labour and care, so great expense of time and trouble, that the possession will not pay thus much of the price ; and, after all this, the man may die two hours after he hath made his troublesome and expensive purchase, and is certain not to enjoy it long. Add to this last, that most men get so little of the world, that it is altogether of a trifling and inconsiderable interest ; that they who have the most of this world, have the most of that but in title and in supreme rights and reserved privileges, the real use descending upon others to more substantial purposes ; that the possession of this trifle is mixed with sorrow upon other accidents, and is allayed with fear ; and that the greatness of men's possessions increases their thirst, and enlarges their wants, by swelling their capacity ; and, above all, is of so great danger to a man's virtue, that a great fortune and a very great virtue are not always observed to grow together. He that observes all this, and much more he may observe, will see that he that gains the whole world, hath made no such great bargain of it, although he had it for nothing but the necessary unavoidable troubles in getting it. But how great a folly is it to buy so great a trouble, so great a vanity, with the loss of our precious souls, remains to be considered in the following parts of the text.

PART II.

“AND lose his own soul?” or, “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—And now the question is finally stated, and the dispute is concerning the sum of affairs. When the question is of life and death, it is not to be rashly settled. And, therefore, when the soul is at stake, not for its temporal, but for its eternal interest, it is not good to be hasty in determining, without taking just measures of the exchange. Solomon had the good things of the world actually in possession ; and he tried them at the touchstone of prudence and natural value, and found them allayed with vanity and imperfection ; and we that see them ‘weighed in the balance of the sanctuary,’ and tried by the touchstone of the Spirit, find them not only light and unprofitable, but pungent and dolorous. But now we are to consider what it is that men part with and lose, when, with passion and impotency, they get the world ; and that will present the bargain to be a huge infelicity. And this I observe to be intimated in the word, *lose*. For he that gives gold for cloth, or precious stones for bread, serves his needs of nature, and loses nothing by it ; and the merchant that found a pearl of great price, and sold all that he had to make the purchase of it, made a good venture ; he was no loser : but here the case is otherwise : when a man gains the whole world, and his soul goes in the exchange, he hath not done like a merchant, but like a child or prodigal ; he hath given himself away, he hath lost all that can distinguish him from a slave or a miserable person, he loses his soul in the exchange. For the soul of a man all the world cannot be a just price ; a man may lose it, or throw it away, but he can never make a good exchange when he parts with this jewel : and, therefore, our blessed Saviour rarely well expresses it by “lose,” which is fully opposed to

‘gain ;’ it is such an ill market a man makes, as if he should proclaim his riches and goods vendible for a garland of thistles decked and trimmed up with the stinking poppy.

But we shall better understand the nature of this bargain if we consider the soul that is exchanged ; what it is in itself, in order, not of nature, but to felicity and the capacities of joy ; secondly, what price the Son of God paid for it ; and, thirdly, what it is to lose it ; that is, what miseries and tortures are signified by losing a soul.

1. First, if we consider what the soul is in its own capacity to happiness, we shall find it to be an excellency greater than the sun, of an angelical substance, sister to a cherubim, an image of the Divinity, and the great argument of that mercy whereby God did distinguish us from the lower form of beasts, and trees, and minerals.

For, so it was, the Scripture affirms that “ God made man after his own image,” that is, not according to the likeness of any of those creatures which were pre-existent to man’s production, not according to any of those images or ideas whereby God created the heavens and the earth, but by a new form, to distinguish him from all other substances ; ‘ he made him by a new idea of his own,’ by an uncreated exemplar. And besides, that this was a donation of intelligent faculties, such as we understand to be perfect and essential, or rather the essence of God, it is also a designation of him to a glorious immortality, and communication of the rays and reflections of his own essential felicities.

But the soul is all that whereby we may be, and without which we cannot be, happy. It is not the eye that sees the beauties of the heaven, nor the ear that hears the sweetness of music, or the glad-tidings of a prosperous accident, but the soul that perceives all the relishes of sensual and intellectual perfections ; and the more noble and excellent the soul is, the greater and more savoury are its perceptions. And, if a child beholds the rich ermine, or the diamonds of a starry night, or the order of the world, or hears the discourses of an apostle ; because he makes no reflex acts upon himself, and sees not that he sees, he can have but the pleasure of a fool, or the deliciousness of a mule. But, although the reflection of its own acts be a rare instrument of pleasure or pain respectively, yet the soul’s excellency is, upon the same reason, not perceived by us, by which the sapidness of pleasant things of nature are not understood by a child ; even because the soul cannot reflect far enough. For as the sun, which is the fountain of light and heat, makes violent and direct emissions of his rays from himself, but reflects them no farther than to the bottom of a cloud, or the lowest imaginary circle of the middle region, and, therefore, receives not a duplicate of his own heat : so is the soul of man ; it reflects upon its own inferior actions of particular sense, or general understanding ; but, because it knows little of its own nature, the manner of volition, the immediate instruments of understanding, the way how it comes to meditate ; and cannot discern how a sudden thought arrives, or the solution of a doubt not depending upon preceding premises ; therefore, above half its pleasures are abated, and its own worth less understood ; and, possibly, it is the better it is so. If the elephant knew his strength, or the horse the vigorousness of his own spirit, they would be as rebellious against their rulers as unreasonable men against government ; nay, the angels themselves, because their light reflected home to their orbs, and they understood all the secrets of their own perfection, they grew vertiginous, and fell from the battlements of heaven. But the excel-

lency of a human soul shall then be truly understood, when the reflection will make no distraction of our faculties, nor enkindle any irregular fires ; when we may understand ourselves without danger.

In the mean time this consideration is gone high enough, when we understand the soul of a man to be so excellently perfect, that we cannot understand how excellently perfect it is ; that being the best way of expressing our conceptions of God himself. And, therefore, I shall not need by distinct discourses to represent that the will of man is the last resort and sanctuary of true pleasure, which, in its formality, can be nothing else but a conformity of possession or of being to the will ; that the understanding, being the channel and conveyance of the noblest perceptions, feeds upon pleasures in all its proportionate acts, and unless it be disturbed by intervening sins and remembrances derived hence, keeps a perpetual festival ; that the passions are every of them fitted with an object, in which they rest as in their centre ; that they have such delight in these their proper objects, that too often they venture a damnation rather than quit their interest and possession. But yet from these considerations it would follow, that to lose a soul, which is designed to be an immense sea of pleasure, even in its natural capacities, is to lose all that whereby a man can possibly be, or be supposed, happy. And so much the rather is this understood to be an insupportable calamity, because losing a soul in this sense is not a mere privation of those felicities, of which a soul is naturally designed to be a partaker, but it is an investing it with contrary objects, and cross effects, and dolorous perceptions ; for the will, if it misses its desires, is afflicted ; and the understanding, when it ceases to be ennobled with excellent things, is made ignorant as a swine, dull as the foot of a rock ; and the affections are in the destitution of their perceptive actions made tumultuous, vexed, and discomposed to the height of rage and violence. But this is but the ‘beginning of those throes,’ which end not but in eternal infelicity.

2. Secondly : If we consider the price that the Son of God paid for the redemption of a soul, we shall better estimate of it, than from the weak discourses of our imperfect and unlearned philosophy. Not the spoil of rich provinces, not the estimate of kingdoms, not the price of Cleopatra’s draught, nor any thing that was corruptible or perishing : for that which could not one minute retard the term of its own natural dissolution, could not be a price for the redemption of one perishing soul. And if we list but to remember, and then consider, that a miserable, lost, and accursed soul, does so infinitely undervalue and disrelish all the goods and riches that this world dotes on, that he hath no more gust in them, or pleasure, than the fox hath in eating a turf ; that, if he could be imagined to be the lord of ten thousand worlds, he would give them all for any shadow of hope of a possibility of returning to life again ; that Dives in hell would have willingly gone on an embassy to his father’s house, that he might have been quit a little from his flames, and on that condition would have given Lazarus the fee-simple of all his temporal possessions, though he had once denied to relieve him with the superfluities of his table ; we shall soon confess that a moment of time is no good exchange for an eternity of duration ; and a light, unprofitable possession is not to be put in the balance against a soul, which is the glory of the creation ; a soul, with whom God had made a contract, and contracted excellent relations, it being one of God’s appellatives, that he is ‘the Lover of souls.’

When God made a soul, it was only, “Let us make man in our image.”

He spake the word, and it was done. But, when man had lost this soul which the Spirit of God breathed into him, it was not so soon recovered. It is like the resurrection, which hath troubled the faith of many, who are more apt to believe that God made a man from nothing, than that he can return a man from dust and corruption. But for this resurrection of the soul, for the re-implacing the Divine image, for the rescuing it from the devil's power, for the re-entitling it to the kingdoms of grace and glory, God did a greater work than the creation; he was fain to contract Divinity to a span, to send a person to die for us, who, of himself, could not die, and was constrained to use rare and mysterious arts to make him capable of dying; he prepared a person instrumental to his purpose, by sending his Son from his own bosom, a person both God and man, an enigma to all nations and to all sciences; one that ruled over all the angels that walked upon the pavements of heaven, whose feet were clothed with stars, whose eyes were brighter than the sun, whose voice is louder than thunder, whose understanding is larger than that infinite space, which we imagine in the uncircumscribed distance beyond the first orb of heaven; a person to whom felicity was as essential as life to God: this was the only person, that was designed, in the eternal decrees of the Divine predestination, to pay the price of a soul, to ransom us from death; less than this person could not do it. For although a soul in its essence is finite, yet there were many infinities which were incident and annexed to the condition of lost souls. For all which because provision was to be made, nothing less than an infinite excellence could satisfy for a soul who was lost to infinite and eternal ages, who was to be afflicted with insupportable and undetermined, that is, next to infinite, pains; who was to bear the load of an infinite anger from the provocation of an eternal God. And yet if it be possible that infinite can receive degrees, this is but one-half of the abyss, and I think the lesser. For that this person, who was God eternal, should be lessened in all his appearances to a span, to the little dimensions of a man; and that he should really become very contemptibly little, although at the same time, he was infinitely and unalterably great; that his essential, natural, and necessary felicity should turn into an intolerable, violent, and immense calamity to his person; that this great God should not be admitted to pay the price of our redemption, unless he would suffer that horrid misery, which that lost soul should suffer: as it represents the glories of his goodness, who used such rare and admirable instruments in actuating the designs of his mercy, so it shows our condition to have been very desperate, and our loss invaluable.

A soul in God's account is valued at the price of the blood, and shame, and tortures of the Son of God; and yet we throw it away for the exchange of sins, that a man naturally is ashamed to own; we lose it for the pleasure, the sottish, beastly pleasure of a night. I need not say, we lose our soul to save our lives; for, though that was our blessed Saviour's instance of the great unreasonableness of men, who by 'saving their lives, lose them,' that is, in the great account of doomsday; though this, I say, be extremely unreasonable, yet there is something to be pretended in the bargain; nothing to excuse him with God, but something in the accounts of timorous men; but to lose our souls with swearing, that unprofitable, dishonourable, and unpleasant vice; to lose our souls with disobedience or rebellion, a vice that brings a curse and danger all the way in this life; to

lose our souls with drunkenness, a vice which is painful and sickly in the very acting it, which hastens our damnation by shortening our lives; are instances fit to be put in the stories of fools and madmen. And all vice is a degree of the same unreasonableness; the most splendid temptation being nothing but a pretty well-weaved fallacy, a mere trick, a sophism, and a cheating and abusing the understanding. But that which I consider here is, that it is an affront and contradiction to the wisdom of God, that we should so slight and undervalue a soul, in which our interest is so concerned; a soul, which he who made it, and who delighted not to see it lost, did account a fit purchase to be made by the exchange of his Son, the eternal Son of God. To which also I add this additional account, that a soul is so greatly valued by God, that we are not to venture the loss of it to save all the world. For, therefore, whosoever should commit a sin to save kingdoms from perishing; or, if the case should be put, that all the good men, and good causes, and good things in this world, were to be destroyed by tyranny, and it were in our power by perjury to save all these; that doing this sin would be so far from hallowing the crime, that it were to offer to God a sacrifice of what he most hates, and to serve him with swine's blood; and the rescuing all these from a tyrant, or a hangman, could not be pleasing to God upon those terms; because a soul is lost by it, which is, in itself, a greater loss and misery than all the evils in the world put together can outbalance, and a loss of that thing for which Christ gave his blood a price. Persecutions and temporal death in holy men, and in a just cause, are but seeming evils, and, therefore, not to be bought off with the loss of a soul, which is a real, but an intolerable calamity. And if God, for his own sake, would not have all the world saved by sin, that is, by the hazarding of a soul, we should do well, for our own sakes, not to lose a soul for trifles, for things that make us here to be miserable, and even here also to be ashamed.

3. But it may be, some natures, or some understandings, care not for all this; therefore, I proceed to the third and most material consideration as to us, and I consider what it is to lose a soul. Which Hierocles thus explicates, "An immortal substance can die, not by ceasing to be, but by losing all being well," by becoming miserable. And it is remarkable, when our blessed Saviour gave us caution that we should "not fear them that can kill the body only, but fear him," he says not that can kill the soul, but "that is able to destroy the body and soul in hell;"* which word signifieth not 'death,' but 'tortures.' For some have chosen death for sanctuary, and fled to it to avoid intolerable shame, to give a period to the sense of a sharp grief, or to cure the earthquakes of fear; and the damned perishing souls shall wish for death with a desire impatient as their calamity; but this shall be denied them, because death were a deliverance, a mercy, and a pleasure, of which these miserable persons must despair for ever.

I shall not need to represent to your considerations those expressions of Scripture, which the Holy Ghost hath set down to represent to our capacities the greatness of this perishing, choosing such circumstances of character as were then usual in the world, and which are dreadful to our understanding as any thing; 'hell-fire' is the common expression; for the

* Matt. xix. 23.

Eastern nations accounted burnings the greatest of these miserable punishments, and burning malefactors was frequent. "Brimstone and fire," so St John * calls the state of punishment, "prepared for the devil and all his servants;" he added the circumstance of brimstone, for, by this time, the devil had taught the world more ingenious pains, and himself was newly escaped out of boiling oil and brimstone, and such bituminous matter; and the Spirit of God knew right well the worst expression was not bad enough. Our blessed Saviour calls it, "the outer darkness;" that is, not only an abjection from the beatific regions, where God, and his angels, and his saints dwell for ever; but then there is a positive state of misery expressed by darkness, as two apostles, St Peter and St Jude, call it, "the blackness of darkness for ever." In which, although it is certain that God, whose justice there rules, will inflict but just so much as our sins deserve, and not superadd degrees of undeserved misery, as he does to the saints of glory, (for God gives to blessed souls in heaven more, infinitely more, than all their good works could possibly deserve; and, therefore, their glory is infinitely bigger glory than the pains of hell are great pains;) yet because God's justice in hell rules alone, without the allays and sweeter abatements of mercy, they shall have pure and unmingled misery; no pleasant thought to refresh their weariness, no comfort in another accident to alleviate their pressures, no waters to cool their flames. But because when there is a great calamity upon a man, every such man thinks himself the most miserable; and though there are great degrees of pain in hell, yet there are none perceived by him that thinks he suffers the greatest; it follows, that every man that loses his soul in this darkness, is miserable beyond all those expressions, which the tortures of this world could furnish to the writers of the holy Scripture.

But I shall choose to represent this consideration in that expression of our blessed Saviour, Mark ix. 44, which himself took out of the prophet Isaiah, lvi. 24, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." This is the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet: for although this expression was a prediction of that horrid calamity and abscission of the Jewish nation, when God poured out a full phial of his wrath upon the crucifiers of his Son, and that this, which was the greatest calamity which ever did, or ever shall happen to a nation, Christ, with great reason, took to describe the calamity of accursed souls, as being the greatest instance to signify the greatest torment: yet we must observe that the difference of each state makes the same words in the several cases to be of infinite distinction. The worm stuck close to the Jewish nation, and the fire of God's wrath flamed out till they were consumed with a great and unheard-of destruction, till many millions did die accursedly, and the small remnant became vagabonds, and were reserved, like broken pieces after a storm, to show the greatness of the storm and misery of the shipwreck: but then this being translated to signify the state of accursed souls, whose dying is a continual perishing, who cannot cease to be, it must mean an eternity of duration, in a proper and natural signification.

And that we may understand it fully, observe the place in Isa. xxxiv. 8, &c. The prophet prophesies of the great destruction of Jerusalem for all her great iniquities: "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year

of recompenses for the controversy of Sion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day: the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it, for ever and ever." This is the final destruction of the nation; but this destruction shall have an end, because the nation shall end, and the anger also shall end in its own period, even then when God shall call the Jews into the common inheritance with the Gentiles, and all 'become the sons of God.' And this also was the period of their 'worm,' as it is of their 'fire,' the fire of the Divine vengeance upon the nation; which was not to be extinguished till they were destroyed, as we see it come to pass. And thus also in St Jude, "the angels who kept not their first state," are said to be "reserved" by God "in everlasting chains under darkness:" which word, 'everlasting,' signifies not absolutely to eternity, but to the utmost end of that period; for so it follows, "unto the judgment of the great day;" that 'everlasting' lasts no longer. And in ver. 7, the word 'eternal' is just so used. The men of "Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" that is, of a fire which burned, till they were quite destroyed, and the cities and the country with an irreparable ruin, never to be rebuilt and re-inhabited as long as this world continues. The effect of which observation is this:

That these words, "for ever,—everlasting,—eternal,—the never-dying worm,—the fire unquenchable," being words borrowed by our blessed Saviour and his apostles from the style of the Old Testament, must have a signification just proportionable to the state in which they signify: so that as this worm, when it signifies a temporal infliction, means a worm that never ceases giving torment till the body is consumed; so when it is translated to an immortal state, it must signify as much in that proportion: that 'eternal,' that 'everlasting,' hath no end at all: because the soul cannot be killed in the natural sense, but is made miserable and perishing for ever: that is, 'the worm shall not die' so long as the soul shall be unconsumed; 'the fire shall not be quenched' till the period of an immortal nature comes. And that this shall be absolutely for ever, without any restriction, appears unanswerable in this, because the same 'for ever' that is for the blessed souls, the same 'for ever' is for the accursed souls: but the blessed souls, "that die in the Lord, henceforth shall die no more, death hath no power over them; for death is destroyed, it is swallowed up in victory," saith St Paul; and "there shall be no more death," saith St John.* So that, because 'for ever' hath no end, till the thing or the duration itself have end, in the same sense in which the saints and angels "give glory to God for ever," in the same sense the lost souls shall suffer the evils of their sad inheritance: and since, after this death of nature, which is a separation of soul and body, there remains no more death, but this second death, this eternal perishing of miserable accursed souls, whose duration must be eternal; it follows, that 'the worm of conscience,' and 'the unquenchable fire' of hell, have no period at all, but shall last as long as God lasts, or the measures of a proper eternity; that they who provoke God to wrath by their base, unreasonable, and sottish practices, may know what their portion

* Rev. xxi 4.

shall be in the everlasting habitations. And yet, suppose that Origen's opinion had been true, and that accursed souls should have ease and a period to their tortures after a thousand years; I pray, let it be considered, whether it be not a great madness to choose the pleasures or the wealth of a few years here, with trouble, with danger, with uncertainty, with labour, with intervals of sickness; and for this to endure the flames of hell for a thousand years together. The pleasures of the world no man can have for a hundred years; and no man hath pleasure a hundred days together, but he hath some trouble intervening, or at least a weariness and a loathing of the pleasure: and therefore to endure insufferable calamities, suppose it be for a hundred years, without any interruption, without so much comfort as the light of a small candle, or a drop of water amounts to in a fever, is a bargain to be made by no man that loves himself, or is not in love with infinite affliction.

If a man were condemned but to lie still, or to lie in bed in one posture without turning, for seven years together, would he not buy it off with the loss of all his estate? If a man were to be put upon the rack for every day for three months together (suppose him able to live so long), what would not he do to be quit of his torture? Would any man curse the king to his face, if he were sure to have both his hands burnt off, and to be tormented with torments three years together? Would any man in his wits accept of a hundred pounds a year for forty years, if he were sure to be tormented in the fire for the next hundred years together without intermission? Think, then, what a thousand years signify; ten ages, the age of two empires. But this account, I must tell you, is infinitely short, though I thus discourse to you how great fools wicked men are, though this opinion should be true. A goodly comfort, surely, that for two or three years' sottish pleasure, a man shall be infinitely tormented but for a thousand years! But then when we cast up the minutes, and years, and ages of eternity, the consideration itself is a great hell to those persons who by their evil lives are consigned to such sad and miserable portions.

A thousand years is a long while to be in torment: we find a fever of one and twenty days to be like an age in length; but when the duration of an intolerable misery is for ever in the height, and for ever beginning, and ten thousand years have spent no part of its term, but it makes a perpetual efflux, and is like the centre of a circle, which ever transmits lines to the circumference: this is a consideration so sad, that the horror of it, and the reflection upon its abode and duration, make a great part of the hell: for hell could not be hell without the despair of accursed souls; for any hope were a refreshment, and a drop of water, which would help to allay those flames, which as they burn intolerably, so they must burn for ever.

And I desire you to consider, that although the Scripture uses the word 'fire' to express the torments of accursed souls, yet fire can no more equal the pangs of hell than it can torment an immaterial substance; the pains of perishing souls being as much more afflictive than the smart of fire, as the smart of fire is troublesome beyond the softness of Persian carpets, or the sensuality of the Asian luxury. For the pains of hell, and the perishing or losing the soul, is to suffer the wrath of God: "our God is a consuming fire," that is, the fire of hell. When God takes away all comfort from us, nothing to support our spirit is left us; when sorrow is our food, and tears our drink; when it is eternal night, without sun, or star, or lamp, or

sleep; when we burn with fire without light, that is, are laden with sadness, without remedy, or hope of ease; and that this wrath is to be expressed and to fall upon us in spiritual, immaterial, but most accursed, most pungent, and dolorous emanations; then we feel what it is to lose a soul.

We may guess at it by the terrors of a guilty conscience, those secret ‘ lashings and whips’ of the exterminating angel, those thorns in the soul, when a man is haunted by an evil spirit; those butcheries,—which the soul of a tyrant, or a violent or a vicious person, when he falls into fear or any calamity, does feel,—are the infinite arguments, that hell,—which is the consummation of the torment of conscience, just as manhood is the consummation of infancy, or as glory is the perfection of grace,—is an affliction greater than the bulk of heaven and earth; for there it is that God pours out the treasures of his wrath, and empties the whole magazine of thunderbolts, and all the armoury of God is employed, not in the chastising, but in the tormenting of a perishing soul. “For every wickedness that any man commits in his life, when he comes to hell, he hath stamped upon his soul an invisible brand” and mark of torment, and this begins here, and is not cancelled by death, but there is enlarged by the greatness of infinity, and the abodes of eternity. How great these torments of conscience are here, let any man imagine that can but understand what despair means; despair upon just reason: let it be what it will, no misery can be greater than despair. And because I hope none here have felt those horrors to an evil conscience which are consignations to eternity, you may please to learn it by your own reason, or else by the sad instances of story. It is reported of Petrus Ilosuanus, a Polish schoolmaster, that having read some ill-managed discourses of absolute decrees and Divine reprobation, he began to be fantastic and melancholic, and apprehensive that he might be one of those many whom God had decreed for hell from all eternity. From possible to probable, from probable to certain, the temptation soon carried him: and when he once began to believe himself to be a person inevitably perishing, it is not possible to understand perfectly what infinite fears, and agonies, and despairs, what tremblings, what horrors, what confusion and amazement, the poor man felt within him, to consider that he was to be tormented extremely, without remedy, even to eternal ages. This, in a short continuance, grew insufferable, and prevailed upon him so far, that he hanged himself, and left an account of it to this purpose in writing in his study: “I am gone from hence to the flames of hell, and have forced my way thither, being impatient to try what those great torments are, which here I have feared with an insupportable amazement.” This instance may suffice to show what it is to lose a soul. But I will take off from this sad discourse; only I shall crave your attention to a word of exhortation.

That you take care, lest for the purchase of a little, trifling, inconsiderable portion of the world, you come into this place and state of torment. Although Homer was pleased to compliment the beauty of Helena to such a height, as to say, “it was a sufficient price for all the evils which the Greeks and Trojans suffered in ten years:” yet it was a more reasonable conjecture of Herodotus, that, during the ten years’ siege of Troy, Helena, for whom the Greeks fought, was in Egypt, not in the city; because it was unimaginable but the Trojans would have thrown her over the walls, rather than, for the sake of such a trifle, have endured so great calamities. We are more sottish than the Trojans, if we retain our Helena, any one beloved

lust, a painted devil, any sugared temptation, with (not the hazard, but) the certainty of having such horrid miseries, such invaluable losses. And certainly, it is a strange stupidity of spirit that can sleep in the midst of such thunder; when God speaks from heaven with his loudest voice, and draws aside his curtain, and shows his arsenal and his armoury, full of arrows steeled with wrath, headed and pointed, and hardened with vengeance, still to snatch at those arrows, if they come but in the retinue of a rich fortune or a vain mistress, if they wait but upon pleasure or profit, or in the rear of an ambitious design.

But let us not have such a hardness against the threats and representations of the Divine vengeance, as to take the little imposts and revenues of the world, and stand in defiance against God and the fears of hell; unless we have a charm that we can be "invisible to the Judge" of heaven and earth, and are impregnable against, or are sure we shall be insensible of, the miseries of a perishing soul.

There is a sort of men, who, because they will be vicious and atheistical in their lives, have no way to go on with any plaisance and without huge disturbances, but by being also atheistical in their opinions; and to believe that the story of hell is but a bugbear to affright children and fools, easy-believing people, to make them soft and apt for government and designs of princes. And this is an opinion that befriends none but impure and vicious persons. Others there are, that believe God to be all mercy, that he forgets his justice; believing that none shall perish with so sad a ruin, if they do but at their death-bed ask God forgiveness, and say they are sorry, but yet continue their impiety till their house be ready to fall: being like the Circassians, whose gentlemen enter not in the church till they be threescore years old, that is, in effect, till by their age they cannot any longer use rapine; till then they hear service at their windows, dividing unequally their life between sin and devotion, dedicating their youth to robbery, and their old age to a repentance without restitution.

Our youth, and our manhood, and old age, are all of them due to God, and justice and mercy are to him equally essential; and as this life is a time of the possibilities of mercy, so to them that neglect it, the next world shall be a state of pure and unmingled justice.

Remember the fatal and decretory sentence which God hath passed upon all mankind: "It is appointed to all men once to die, and after death, comes judgment." And if any of us were certain to die next morning, with what earnestness should we pray! with what hatred should we remember our sins! with what scorn should we look upon the licentious pleasures of the world! Then nothing could be welcome unto us but a prayer-book, no company but a comforter and a guide of souls, no employment but repentance, no passions but in order to religion, no kindness for a lust that hath undone us. And if any of you have been arrested with alarms of death, or been in hearty fear of its approach, remember what thoughts and designs then possessed you, how precious a soul was then in your account, and what then you would give that you had despised the world, and done your duty to God and man, and lived a holy life. It will come to that again; and we shall be in that condition in which we shall perfectly understand, that all the things and pleasures of the world are vain, and unprofitable, and irksome, and that he only is a wise man who secures the interest of his soul, though it be with the loss of all this world, and his own life into

the bargain. When we are to depart this life, to go to strange company and stranger places, and to an unknown condition, then a holy conscience will be the best security, the best possession; it will be a horror, that every friend we meet shall, with triumph, upbraid to us the sottishness of our folly: "Lo, this is the goodly change you have made! ~~you had~~ your good things in your lifetime, and how like you the portion, that is reserved to you for ever?" The old rabbins, those poets of religion, report of Moses, that when the courtiers of Pharaoh were sporting with the child Moses, in the chamber of Pharaoh's daughter, they presented to his choice an ingot of gold in one hand and a coal of fire in the other; and that the child snatched at the coal, thrust it into his mouth, and so singed and parched his tongue, that he stammered ever after. And certainly it is infinitely more childish in us, for the glittering of the small glow-worms and the charcoal of worldly possessions, to swallow the flames of hell greedily in our choice: such a bit will produce a worse stammering than Moses had: for so the accursed and lost souls have their ugly and horrid dialect; they roar and blaspheme, blaspheme and roar, for ever. And suppose God should now, at this instant, send the great archangel with his trumpet, to summon all the world to judgment, would not all this seem a notorious visible truth, a truth which you will then wonder that every man did not lay to his heart and preserve there, in actual, pious, and effective consideration? Let the trumpet of God perpetually sound in your ears, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment:" place yourselves, by meditation, every day upon your death-bed, and remember what thoughts shall then possess you, and let such thoughts dwell in your understanding for ever, and be the parent of all your resolutions and actions. The doctors of the Jews report, that when Absalom hanged among the oaks by the hair of the head, he seemed to see under him hell gaping wide ready to receive him; and he durst not cut off the hair that entangled him, for fear he should fall into the horrid lake, whose portion is flames and torment, but chose to protract his miserable life a few minutes in that pain of posture, and to abide the stroke of his pursuing enemies: his condition was sad when his arts of remedy were so vain.

A condemned man hath but small comfort to stay the singing of a long psalm; it is the case of every vicious person. Hell is wide open to every impenitent persevering sinner, to every unpurged person.

And although God hath lighted his candle, and the lantern of his word and clearest revelations is held out to us, that we can see hell in its worst colours and most horrid representments; yet we run greedily after baubles, unto that precipice which swallows up the greatest part of mankind; and then only we begin to consider, when all consideration is fruitless.

He, therefore, is a huge fool, that heaps up riches, that greedily pursues the world, and at the same time (for so it must be) "heaps up wrath to himself against the day of wrath;" when sickness and death arrest him, then they appear unprofitable, and himself extremely miserable; and if you would know how great that misery is, you may take account of it by those fearful words and killing rhetoric of Scripture: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" and, "Who can dwell with the everlasting burnings?" That is, no patience can abide there one hour, where they must dwell for ever.

CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE

SHOWN IN THE SELECTION OF ETERNAL LIFE AS THE CHIEF OBJECT OF PURSUIT.

IT is the duty of Christian prudence to choose the end of a Christian, that which is perfective of a man, satisfactory to reason, the rest of a Christian, and the beatification of his spirit; and that is, to choose and desire, and propound to himself heaven, and the fruition of God, as the end of all his acts and arts, his designs and purposes. For, in the nature of things, that is most eligible and most to be pursued, which is most perfective of our nature, and is the acquiescence, the satisfaction, and proper rest of our most reasonable appetites. Now the things of this world are difficult and uneasy, full of thorns and empty of pleasures; they fill a diseased faculty or an abused sense, but are an infinite dissatisfaction to reason and the appetites of the soul; they are short and transient, and they never abide, unless sorrow, like a chain, be bound about their leg, and then they never stir till the grace of God and religion breaks it, or else that the rust of time eats the chain in pieces; they are dangerous and doubtful, few and difficult, sordid and particular, not only not communicable to a multitude, but not diffusive upon the whole man, there being no one pleasure or object in this world that delights all the parts of man; and, after all this, they are originally from earth and from the creatures, only that they oftentimes contract alliances with hell and the grave, with shame and sorrow; and all these put together make no great amability or proportion to a wise man's choice. But, on the other side, the things of God are the noblest satisfactions to those desires which ought to be cherished and swelled up to infinite; their deliciousness is vast and full of relish, and their very appendant thorns are to be chosen; for they are gilded, they are safe and medicinal, they heal the wound they make, and bring forth fruit of a blessed and a holy life. The things of God and of religion are easy and sweet, they bear entertainments in their hand, and reward at their back; their good is certain and perpetual, and they make us cheerful to-day and pleasant to-morrow; and spiritual songs end not in a sigh and a groan; neither, like unwholesome physic, do they let loose a present humour, and introduce an habitual indisposition; but they bring us to the felicity of God, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever:" they do not give a private and particular delight, but their benefit is public: like the incense of the altar, it sends up a sweet smell to heaven, and makes atonement for the religious man that kindled it, and delights all the standers-by, and makes the very air wholesome. There is no blessed soul goes to heaven, but he makes a general joy in all the mansions where the saints do dwell, and in all the chapels where the angels sing; and the joys of religion are not univocal, but productive of rare, and accidental, and preternatural pleasures; for the music of holy hymns delights the ear, and refreshes the spirit, and makes the very bones of the saint to rejoice. And charity, or the giving alms to the poor, does not only ease the poverty of the receiver, but makes the giver rich, and heals his sickness, and delivers from death: and temperance, though it be in the matter of meat, and drink, and pleasures, yet hath an effect upon the understanding, and makes the reason sober, and the will orderly, and the affections regular, and does things beside and beyond its natural and pro-

per efficacy ; for all the parts of our duty are watered with the showers of blessing, and bring forth fruit according to the influence of Heaven, and beyond the capacities of nature.

All the things of this world are little, and trifling, and limited, and particular, and sometimes necessary, because men are miserable, wanting, and imperfect ; but they never do any thing toward perfection, but their pleasure dies like the time in which it danced awhile ; and when the minute is gone, so is the pleasure too, and leaves no footstep but the impression of a sigh, and dwells no where but in the same house where you shall find yesterday, that is, in forgetfulness and annihilation ; unless its only child, sorrow, shall marry, and breed more of its kind, and so continue its memory and name to eternal ages. It is therefore, the most necessary part of prudence to choose well in the main stake ; and the dispute is not much ; for if eternal things be better than temporal, the soul more noble than the body, virtue more honourable than the basest vices, a lasting joy to be chosen before an eternal sorrow, much to be preferred before little, certainty before danger, public good things before private evils, eternity before moments ; then let us sit down in religion, and make heaven to be our end, God to be our Father, Christ our elder Brother, the Holy Ghost the earnest of our inheritance, virtue to be our employment ; and then we shall never enter into the portion of fools and accursed ill-choosing spirits. Nazianzen said well, " One drop of prudence is more useful than an ocean of a smooth fortune : " for prudence is a rare instrument towards heaven ; and a great fortune is made oftentimes the highway to hell and destruction. However, thus far prudence is our duty ; every man can be so wise, and is bound to it, to choose heaven, and a cohabitation with God, before the possessions and transient vanities of the world.

CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE

SHOWN IN THE USE OF FIT MEANS FOR SECURING ETERNAL LIFE.

It is a duty of Christian prudence to pursue this great end with apt means and instruments in proportion to that end. No wise man will sail to Ormus in a cock-boat, or use a child for his interpreter ; and that general is a Cyclops without an eye, who chooses the sickest men to man his towns and the weakest to fight his battles. It cannot be a vigorous prosecution, unless the means have an efficacy or worth commensurate to all the difficulty, and something of the excellency of that end which is designed. And, indeed, men use not to be so weak in acquiring the possessions of their temporals ; but in matters of religion they think any thing effective enough to secure the greatest interest : as if all the fields of heaven and the regions of that kingdom were waste ground, and wanted a colony of planters ; and that God invited men to heaven upon any terms, that he might rejoice in the multitude of subjects. For certain it is, men do more to get a little money than for all the glories of heaven ; men ' rise up early,' and ' sit up late,' and ' eat the bread of carefulness,' to become richer than their neighbours ; and are amazed at every loss, and impatient of an evil accident, and feel a direct storm of passion if they suffer in their interest. But in order

to heaven they are cold in their religion, undevout in their prayers, incurious in their walking, unwatchful in their circumstances, indifferent in the use of their opportunities, infrequent in their discoursings of it, not inquisitive of the way, and yet think they shall surely go to heaven. But a prudent man knows, that by the greatness of the purchase he is to make an estimate of the value and the price. When we ask of God any great thing,—as wisdom, delivery from sickness, his Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, the grace of chastity, restitution to his favour, or the like,—do we hope to obtain them without a high opinion of the things we ask? and if we value them highly, must we not desire them earnestly? and if we desire them earnestly, must we not beg for them fervently? and whatsoever we ask for fervently, must not we beg for frequently? And then, because prayer is but one hand toward the reaching a blessing, and God requires our co-operation and endeavour, and we must work with both hands, are we not convinced that our prayers are either faint, or a design of laziness, when we either ask coldly, or else pray loudly, hoping to receive the graces we need without labour? A prudent person, that knows to value the best object of his desires, will also know that he must observe the degrees of labour, according to the excellency of the reward. That prayer must be effectual,—fervent,—frequent,—continual,—holy,—passionate,—that must get a grace or secure a blessing: the love that we must have to God, must be such as to keep his commandments, and make us willing to part with all our estate, and all our honour, and our life, for the testimony of a holy conscience: our charity to our neighbour must be expressed in a language of a real friendship, aptness to forgive, readiness to forbear, in pitying infirmities, in relieving necessities, in giving our goods and our lives, and quitting our privileges to save his soul, to secure and support his virtue: our repentance must be full of sorrows and care, of diligence and hatred against sin; it must drive out all, and leave no affections towards it; it must be constant and persevering, fearful of relapse, and watchful of all accidents; our temperance must sometimes turn into abstinence, and most commonly be severe, and ever without reproof: “He that striveth for masteries is temperate,” saith St Paul, “in all things.” He that does all this, may, with some pretence and reason, say, he intends to go to heaven. But they that will not deny a lust, nor restrain an appetite; they that will be drunk when their friends do merrily constrain them, or love a cheap religion, and a gentle and lame prayer, short and soft, quickly said and soon passed over, seldom returning and but little observed; how is it possible that they should think themselves persons disposed to receive such glorious crowns and sceptres, such excellent conditions, which they have not faith enough to believe, nor attention enough to consider, and no man can have wit enough to understand? But so might an Arcadian shepherd look from the rocks, or through the clefts of the valley where his sheep graze, and wonder, that the messenger stays so long from coming to him, to be crowned king of all the Greek islands, or to be adopted heir to the Macedonian monarchy. It is an infinite love to God that we have heaven upon conditions which we can perform with greatest diligence: but truly the lives of men are generally such, that they do things in order to heaven; things, I say, so few, so trifling, so unworthy, that they are not proportionable to the reward of a crown of oak or a yellow riband, the slender reward with which the Romans paid their soldiers for their extraordinary

valour. True it is, that heaven is not, in a just sense of a commutation, a reward, but a gift, and an infinite favour : but yet it is not reached forth but to persons disposed by the conditions of God, which conditions when we pursue in kind, let us be very careful we do not fail of the mighty prize of our high calling, for want of degrees and just measures, the measures of zeal and a mighty love.

INSTANCES OF GOD'S CONCERN FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

GOD, who best loves and best knows how to value our soul, set a price no less upon it than the life-blood of his holy Son ; he hath treated it with variety of usages, according as the world had new guises and new necessities ; he abates it with punishment, to make us avoid greater ; he shortened our life, that we might live for ever ; he turns sickness into virtue ; he brings good out of evil, he turns enmities to advantages, our very sins into repentances and stricter walking ; he defeats all the follies of men and all the arts of the devil, and lays snares and uses violence to secure obedience ; he sends prophets and priests to invite us and to threaten us to felicities ; he restrains us with laws, and he bridles us with honour and shame, reputation and society, friends and foes ; he lays hold on us by the instruments of all the passions ; he is enough to fill our love ; he satisfies our hope ; he affrights us with fear ; he gives us part of our reward in hand, and entertains all our faculties with the promises of an infinite and glorious portion ; he curbs our affections ; he directs our wills ; he instructs our understandings with scriptures, with perpetual sermons, with good books, with frequent discourses, with particular observations and great experience, with accidents and judgments, with rare events of providence and miracles ; he sends his angels to be our guard, and to place us in opportunities of virtue, and to take us off from ill company and places of danger, to set us near to good examples ; he gives us his Holy Spirit, and he becomes to us a principle of a mighty grace, descending upon us in great variety and undiscerned events, besides all those parts of it which men have reduced to a method and an art : and, after all this, he forgives us infinite irregularities, and spares us every day, and still expects, and passes by, and waits all our days, still watching to do us good, and to save that soul which he knows is so precious, one of the chiefest of the works of God and an image of Divinity. Now from all these arts and mercies of God, besides that we have infinite reason to adore his goodness, we have also a demonstration that we ought to do all that possibly we can, and extend all our faculties, and watch all our opportunities, and take in all assistances, to secure the interest of our soul, for which God is pleased to take such care, and use so many arts for its security. If it were not highly worth it, God would not do it : if it were not all of it necessary, God would not do it. But if it be worth it, and all of it be necessary, why should we not labour in order to this great end ? If it be worth so much to God, it is so much more to us : for if we perish, his felicity is undisturbed ; but we are undone, infinitely undone.

MODERN PRETENDERS TO INSPIRATION.

THOSE teachers that pretend to be guided by a private spirit, are certainly false doctors. I remember what Simmias in Plutarch tells concerning Socrates, that if he heard any man say he saw a divine vision, he presently esteemed him vain and proud; but, if he pretended only to have heard a voice, or the word of God, he listened to that religiously, and would inquire of him with curiosity. There was some reason in his fancy; for God does not communicate himself by the eye to men, but by the ear: "Ye saw no figure, but ye heard a voice," said Moses to the people concerning God. And, therefore, if any man pretends to speak the word of God, we will inquire concerning it; the man may the better be heard, because he may be certainly reprov'd if he speaks amiss; but, if he pretends to visions and revelations, to a private spirit, and a mission extraordinary, the man is proud and unlearned, vicious and impudent. "No Scripture is of private interpretation," saith St Peter, that is, 'private emission' or 'declaration.' God's words were delivered indeed by single men, but such as were publicly designed prophets, remarked with a known character, approved of by the high priest and Sanhedrim, endued with a public spirit, and his doctrines were always agreeable to the other Scriptures. But, if any man pretends now to the Spirit, either it must be a private or public. If it be private, it can but be useful to himself alone, and it may cozen him too, if it be not assisted by the spirit of a public man. But if it be a public spirit, it must enter in at the public door of ministerings and Divine ordinances, of God's grace and man's endeavour: it must be subject to the prophets; it is discernible and judicable by them, and, therefore, may be rejected, and then it must pretend no longer. For he that will pretend to an extraordinary spirit, and refuses to be tried by the ordinary ways, must either prophesy or work miracles, or must have a voice from heaven to give him testimony. The prophets in the Old Testament, and the apostles in the New, and Christ between both, had no other way of extraordinary probation; and they that pretend to anything extraordinary, cannot, ought not to be believed, unless they have something more than their own word: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true," said Truth itself, our blessed Lord. But, secondly, they that intend to teach by an extraordinary spirit, if they pretend to teach according to Scripture, must be examined by the measure of Scripture, and then their extraordinary must be judged by the ordinary spirit, and stands or falls by the rules of every good man's religion, and public government; and then we are well enough. But if they speak any thing against Scripture, it is the spirit of Antichrist, and the spirit of the devil: "For if an angel from heaven" (he certainly is a spirit) "preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed."

But this pretence of a single and extraordinary spirit is nothing else but the spirit of pride, error, and delusion; a snare to catch easy and credulous souls, which are willing to die for a gay word and a distorted face; it is the parent of folly and giddy doctrine, impossible to be proved, and, therefore, useless to all purposes of religion, reason, or sober counsels; it is like an invisible colour, or music without a sound; it is, and indeed is so intended to be, a direct overthrow of order, and government, and public min-

istries : it is bold to say any thing, and resolve to prove nothing ; it imposes upon willing people after the same manner that oracles and the lying demons did of old time, abusing men, not by proper efficacy of its own, but because the men love to be abused : it is a great disparagement to the sufficiency of Scripture, and asperses the Divine Providence, for giving so many ages of the church an imperfect religion, expressly against the truth of their words, who said, they ‘ had declared the whole truth of God,’ and ‘ told all the will of God ;’ and it is an affront to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of order, and public ministries. But the will furnishes out malice, and the understanding sends out levity, and they marry, and produce a fantastic dream ; and the daughter, sucking wind instead of ‘ the milk of the word,’ grows up to madness, and the spirit of reprobation. Besides all this, an extraordinary spirit is extremely unnecessary ; and God does not give emissions and miracles from heaven to no purpose, and to no necessities of his church ; for the supplying of which he hath given apostles and evangelists, prophets and pastors, bishops and priests, the spirit of ordination and the spirit of instruction, catechists and teachers, arts and sciences, Scriptures, and a constant succession of expositors, the testimony of churches, and a constant line of tradition, or delivery of apostolical doctrine, in all things necessary to salvation. And, after all this, to have a fungus arise from the belly of mud and darkness, and nourish a glow-worm, that shall challenge to outshine the lantern of God’s word, and all the candles which God set upon a hill, and all that the Spirit hath set upon the candlesticks, and all the stars of Christ’s right hand, is to annul all the excellent, established, orderly, and certain effects of the Spirit of God, and to worship the false fires of the night. He, therefore, that will follow a guide that leads him by an extraordinary spirit, shall go an extraordinary way, and have a strange fortune, and a singular religion, and a portion by himself, a great way off, from the common inheritance of the saints, who are all led by the Spirit of God, and have one heart and one mind, one faith and one hope, the same baptism, and the helps of the ministry, leading them to the common country, which is the portion of all that are the sons of adoption, consigned by the Spirit of God, the earnest of their inheritance.

CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY

IN MAKING AND PERFORMING PROMISES.

CHRISTIAN simplicity relates to promises and acts of grace and favour ; and its caution is, that all promises be simple, ingenuous, agreeable to the intention of the promiser, truly and effectually expressed, and never giving less in the performance than in the promises and words of the expression : concerning which the cases are several. 1. First, all promises in which a third or a second person hath no interest, that is, the promises of kindness and civilities, are tied to pass into performance, according to what is reasonable and proper, and though they may oblige to some small inconvenience, yet never to a great one : as, I will visit you to-morrow morning, because I promised you, and, therefore, I will come, although I have not slept my full sleep ; but according to the rules of equity and beneficence, if I be in a fever, or have reason to fear one, I am disobliged. For the nature

of such promises bears upon them no bigger burden than can be expounded by reasonable civilities, and the common expectation of kind, and the ordinary performances of just men, who do excuse and are excused respectively by all rules of reason proportionably to such small intercourses: and, therefore, although such conditions be not expressed in making promises, yet to perform or rescind them by such laws is not against Christian simplicity.

2. Promises in matters of justice or in matters of grace, as from a superior to an inferior, must be so singly and ingenuously expressed, intended and performed accordingly, that no condition is to be reserved or supposed in them to warrant their nonperformance but impossibility, or, that which is next to it, an intolerable inconvenience; in which cases we have a natural liberty to commute our promises, but so that we pay to the interested person a good at least equal to that which we first promised. And to this purpose it may be added, that it is not against Christian simplicity to express our promises in such words, which we know the interested man will understand to other purposes than I intend, so it be not less that I mean than that he hopes for. When our blessed Saviour told his disciples that 'they should sit upon twelve thrones,' they presently thought they had his bond for a kingdom, and dreamed of wealth and honour, power and a splendid court; and Christ knew they did, but did not disentangle his promise from the enfolded and intricate sense, of which his words were naturally capable: but he performed his promise to better purposes than they hoped for; they were presidents in the conduct of souls, princes of God's people, the chief in sufferings, stood nearest to the cross, had an elder brother's portion in the kingdom of grace, were the founders of churches, and dispensers of the mysteries to the kingdom, and ministers of the Spirit of God, and channels of mighty blessings, under-mediators in the priesthood of their Lord, and 'their names were written in heaven:' and this was infinitely better than to groan and wake under a head pressed with a golden crown and pungent cares, and to eat alone, and to walk in a crowd, and to be vexed with all the public and many of the private evils of the people: which is the sum total of an earthly kingdom.

When God promised to the obedient, that they should live long in the land which he would give them, he meant it of the land of Canaan, but yet reserved to himself the liberty of taking them quickly from that land and carrying them to a better. He that promises to lend me a staff to walk withal, and instead of that gives me a horse to carry me, hath not broken his promise nor dealt deceitfully. And this is God's dealing with mankind; he promises more than we could hope for; and when he hath done that, he gives us more than he hath promised. God hath promised to give to them that fear him, all that they need, food and raiment: but he adds, out of the treasures of his mercy, variety of food and changes of raiment; some to get strength, and some to refresh; something for them that are in health, and some for the sick. And though that skins of bulls, and stags, and foxes, and bears, could have drawn a veil thick enough to hide the apertures of sin and natural shame, and to defend us from heat and cold; yet when he addeth the fleeces of sheep and beavers, and the spoils of silkworms, he hath proclaimed, that although his promises are the bounds of our certain expectation, yet they are not the limits of his loving-kindness; and if he does more than he hath promised, no man can complain that he did otherwise, and did greater things than he said. Thus God does; and,

therefore, so also must we, imitating that example, and transcribing that copy of Divine truth, always remembering, that 'his promises are yea and amen.' And although God often gives more, yet he never gives less; and, therefore, we must never go from our promises, unless we be thrust from thence by disability, or let go by leave, or called up higher by a greater intendment and increase of kindness. And, therefore, when Solyman had sworn to Ibrahim Bassa, that he would never kill him so long as he were alive, he quitted himself but ill, when he sent an eunuch to cut his throat when he slept, because the priest told him that sleep was death. His act was false and deceitful as his great prophet.

But in this part of simplicity we Christians have a most special obligation: for our religion being ennobled by the most and the greatest promises, and our faith made confident by the veracity of our Lord, and his word made certain by miracles and prophecies, and voices from heaven, and all the testimony of God himself; and that truth itself is bound upon us by the efficacy of great endearments and so many precepts; if we shall suffer the faith of a Christian to be an instrument to deceive our brother, and that he must either be incredulous or deceived, uncharitable or deluded like a fool, we dishonour the sacredness of the institution, and become strangers to the spirit of truth and to the eternal word of God. Our blessed Lord would not have his disciples to swear at all,—no, not in public judicature, if the necessities of the world would permit him to be obeyed. If Christians will live according to the religion, the word of a Christian were a sufficient instrument to give testimony, and to make promises, to secure a faith; and upon that supposition oaths were useless, and, therefore, forbidden, because there could be no necessity to invoke God's name in promises or affirmations, if men were indeed Christians, and therefore, in that case, would be a taking it in vain; but because many are not, and they that are in name, oftentimes are in nothing else,—it became necessary that man should swear in judgment and in public courts. But consider who it was that invented and made the necessity of oaths, of bonds, of securities, of statutes, extents, judgments, and all the artifices of human diffidence and dishonesty. These things were indeed found out by men; but the necessity of these was from him that is the father of lies, from him that hath made many fair promises, but never kept any; or if he did, it was to do a bigger mischief, to cozen the more. For so does the devil; he promises rich harvests, and blasts the corn in the spring; he tells his servants they shall be rich, and fills them with beggarly qualities, makes them base and indigent, greedy and penurious; and they that serve him entirely, as witches and such miserable persons, never can be rich; if he promises health, then men grow confident and intemperate, and do such things whereby they shall die the sooner, and die longer; they shall die eternally. He deceives men in their trust, and frustrates their hopes, and eludes their expectations; and his promises have a period set, beyond which they cannot be true; for wicked men shall enjoy a fair fortune but till their appointed time, and then it ends in perfect and most accomplished misery: and therefore, even in this performance, he deceives them most of all, promising jewels, and performing coloured stones and glass gems, that he may cozen them of their glorious inheritance. All fraudulent breakers of promises dress themselves by his glass, whose best imagery is deformity and lies.

THE MIRACLES OF THE DIVINE MERCY.

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon thee.—*Psal.* lxxxvi. 5.

MAN having destroyed that which God delighted in, that is the beauty of his soul, fell into an evil portion, and being seized upon by the Divine justice, grew miserable, and condemned to an incurable sorrow. Poor Adam, being banished and undone, went and lived a sad life in the mountains of India, and turned his face and his prayers towards Paradise; thither he sent his sighs, to that place he directed his devotions, there was his heart now, where his felicity sometimes had been: but he knew not how to return thither, for God was his enemy, and, by many of his attributes, opposed himself against him. God's power was armed against him; and poor man, whom a fly or a fish could kill, was assaulted and beaten with a sword of fire in the hand of a cherubim. God's eye watched him, his omniscience was man's accuser, his severity was the judge, his justice the executioner. It was a mighty calamity that man was to undergo, when he that made him, armed himself against his creature, which would have died or turned to nothing, if he had but withdrawn the miracles and the almightiness of his power: if God had taken his arm from under him, man had perished. But it was, therefore, a greater evil when God laid his arm upon him and against him, and seemed to support him, that he might be longer killing him. In the midst of these sadnesses, God remembered his own creature, and pitied it; and, by his mercy, rescued him from the hands of his power, and the sword of his justice, and the guilt of his punishment, and the disorder of his sin; and placed him in that order of good things where he ought to have stood. It was mercy that preserved the noblest of God's creatures here below; he who stood condemned and undone under all the other attributes of God, was only saved and rescued by his mercy; that it may be evident that God's mercy is above all his works, and above all ours, greater than the creation, and greater than our sins. As is his majesty, so is his mercy, that is, without measures and without rules, sitting in heaven and filling all the world, calling for a duty that he may give a blessing, making man that he may save him, punishing him that he may preserve him. And God's justice bowed down to his mercy, and all his power passed into mercy, and his omniscience converted into care and watchfulness, into providence and observation for man's avail; and Heaven gave its influence for man, and rained showers for our food and drink; and the attributes and acts of God sat at the foot of mercy, and all that mercy descended upon the head of man. For so the light of the world in the morning of the creation was spread abroad like a curtain, and dwelt no where, but filled the 'expanse' with a dissemination great as the unfoldings of the air's looser garment, or the wilder fringes of the fire, without knots, or order, or combination; but God gathered the beams in his hand, and united them into a globe of fire, and all the light of the world became the body of the sun; and he lent some to his weaker sister that walks in the night, and guides a traveller, and teaches him to distinguish a house from a river, or a rock from a plain field. So is the mercy of God, a vast 'expanse' and a huge ocean; from eternal ages

it dwelt round about the throne of God, and it filled all that infinite distance and space, that hath no measures but the will of God: until God, desiring to communicate that excellency and make it relative, created angels, that he might have persons capable of huge gifts; and man, who he knew would need forgiveness. For so the angels, our elder brothers, dwelt for ever in the house of their Father, and never brake his commandments; but we, the younger, like prodigals, forsook our Father's house, and went into a strange country, and followed stranger courses, and spent the portion of our nature, and forfeited all our title to the family, and came to need another portion. For, ever since the fall of Adam,—who, like an unfortunate man, spent all that a wretched man could need, or a happy man could have,—our life is repentance, and forgiveness is all our portion; and though angels were objects of God's bounty, yet man only is, in proper speaking, the object of his mercy: and the mercy which dwelt in an infinite circle, became confined to a little ring, and dwelt here below; and here shall dwell below, till it hath carried all God's portion up to heaven, where it shall reign in glory upon our crowned heads for ever and ever!

But for him that considers God's mercies, and dwells a while in that depth, it is hard not to talk wildly, and without art and order of discoursings. St Peter talked he knew not what, when he entered into a cloud with Jesus upon Mount Tabor, though it passed over him like the little curtains that ride upon the north wind, and pass between the sun and us. And when we converse with a light greater than the sun, and taste a sweetness more delicious than the dew of heaven, and in our thoughts entertain the ravishments and harmony of that atonement, which reconciles God to man, and man to felicity,—it will be more easily pardoned, if we should be like persons that admire much, and say but little; and indeed we can best confess the glories of the Lord by dazzled eyes, and a stammering tongue, and a heart overcharged with the miracles of this infinity. For so those little drops that run over, though they be not much in themselves, yet they tell that the vessel was full, and could express the greatness of the shower no otherwise but by spilling, and in artificial expressions and runnings over. But because I have undertaken to tell the drops of the ocean, and to span the measures of eternity, I must do it by the great lines of revelation and experience, and tell concerning God's mercy as we do concerning God himself, that he is that great fountain of which we all drink, and the great rock of which we all eat, and on which we all dwell, and under whose shadow we all are refreshed. God's mercy is all this; and we can only draw great lines of it, and reckon the constellations of our hemisphere, instead of telling the number of the stars; we only can reckon what we feel and what we live by: and though there be, in every one of these lines of life, enough to engage us for ever to do God service, and to give him praises; yet it is certain there are very many mercies of God upon us, and toward us, and concerning us, which we neither feel, nor see, nor understand as yet; but yet we are blessed by them, and are preserved and secured, and we shall then know them, when we come to give God thanks in the festivities of an eternal sabbath. But that I may confine my discourse into order, since the subject of it cannot, I consider:

That mercy, being an emanation of the Divine goodness upon us, supposes us and found us miserable. In this account concerning the mercies of God, I must not reckon the miracles and graces of the creation, or any

thing of the nature of man, nor tell how great an endearment God passed upon us that he made us men, capable of felicity, fitted with rare instruments of discourse and reason, passions and desires, notices of sense, and reflections upon that sense ; that we have not the deformity of a crocodile nor the motion of a worm, nor the hunger of a wolf, nor the wildness of a tiger, nor the birth of vipers, nor the life of flies, nor the death of serpents. Our excellent bodies and useful faculties, the upright motion, and the tenacious hand, the fair appetites and proportioned satisfactions, our speech and our perceptions, our acts of life, the rare invention of letters, and the use of writing, and speaking at distance, the intervals of rest and labour, (either of which, if they were perpetual, would be intolerable,) the needs of nature and the provisions of Providence, sleep and business, refreshments of the body and entertainments of the soul ; these are to be reckoned as acts of bounty rather than mercy : God gave us these when he made us, and before we needed mercy ; these were portions of our nature, or provided to supply our consequent necessities : but when we forfeited all God's favour by our sins, then that they were continued or restored to us became a mercy, and, therefore, ought to be reckoned upon this new account. For it was a rare mercy that we were suffered to live at all, or that the anger of God did permit to us one blessing, that he did punish us so gently : but when the rack is changed into an axe, and the axe into an imprisonment, and the imprisonment changed into an enlargement, and the enlargement into an entertainment in the family, and this entertainment passes on to an adoption ; these are steps of a mighty favour, and perfect redemption from our sin : and the returning back our own goods is a gift, and a perfect donative, sweetened by the apprehensions of the calamity from whence every lesser punishment began to free us. And thus it was that God punished us, and visited the sin of Adam upon his posterity. He threatened we should die, and so we did, but not so as we deserved : we waited for death, and stood sentenced, and are daily summoned by sicknesses and uneasiness ; and every day is a new reprieve, and brings a new favour, certain as the revolution of the sun upon that day ; and at last, when we must die by the irreversible decree, that death is changed into a sleep, and that sleep is in the bosom of Christ, and there dwells all peace and security, and it shall pass forth into glories and felicities. We looked for a judge, and behold a Saviour ! we feared an accuser, and behold an Advocate ! we sat down in sorrow, and rose in joy : we leaned upon rhubarb and aloes, and our aprons were made of the sharp leaves of Indian fig-trees, and so we fed, and so were clothed ; but the rhubarb proved medicinal, and the rough leaf of the tree brought its fruit wrapped up in its foldings : and round about our dwellings was planted a hedge of thorns and bundles of thistles, the aconite and the briony, the nightshade and the poppy ; and at the root of these grew the healing plantain, which, rising up into a tallness, by the friendly invitation of heavenly influence, turned about the tree of the cross, and cured the wounds of the thorns, and the curse of the thistles and the malediction of man, and the wrath of God. ' If God be thus kind when he is angry, what is he when he feasts us with caresses of his more tender kindness ? ' All that God restored to us after the forfeiture of Adam, grew to be a double kindness ; for it became the expression of a bounty which knew not how to repent, a graciousness that was not to be altered, though we were ; and that was it which we needed. That is the first general : all the

bounties of the creation became mercies to us when God continued them to us, and restored them after they were forfeited.

But as a circle begins every where and ends no where, so do the mercies of God : after all this huge progress, now it began anew : ‘ God is good and gracious,’ and ‘ God is ready to forgive.’ Now, that he had once more made us capable of mercies, God had what he desired, and what he could rejoice in, something upon which he might pour forth his mercies. And, by the way, this I shall observe, (for I cannot but speak without art, when I speak of that which hath no measure,) God made us capable of one sort of his mercies, and we made ourselves capable of another. ‘ God is good and gracious,’ that is, desirous to give great gifts : and of this God made us receptive, first by giving us natural capabilities,—that is, by giving those gifts, he made us capable of more ; and next, by restoring us to his favour, that he might not, by our provocations, be hindered from raining down his mercies. But God is also ‘ ready to forgive :’ and of this kind of mercy we made ourselves capable, even by not deserving it. Our sin made way for his grace, and our infirmities called upon his pity ; and because we sinned we became miserable, and because we were miserable we became pitiable ; and this opened the other treasure of his mercy ; that because our ‘ sin abounds,’ his ‘ grace may superabound.’ In this method we must confine our thoughts :

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|---------------|---|-----------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Giving. | { | Thou, Lord, art good, | { | plentiful in mercy to all them |
| 2. Forgiving. | | and ready to forgive, | | that call upon thee. |

1. God’s mercies, or the mercies of his giving, came first upon us by mending of our nature : for the ignorance we fell into, is instructed, and better learned in spiritual notices, than Adam’s morning knowledge in Paradise ; our appetites are made subordinate to the Spirit, and the liberty of will is improved, having ‘ the liberty of the sons of God ;’ and Christ hath done us more grace and advantage than we lost in Adam : and as man lost Paradise, and got heaven ; so he lost the integrity of the first, and got the perfection of the second Adam ; his ‘ living soul’ is changed into ‘ a quickening spirit ;’ our discerning faculties are filled with the spirit of faith, and our passions and desires, are entertained with hope, and our election is sanctified with charity, and our first life of a temporal possession is passed into a better, a life of spiritual expectations : and, though our first parent was forbidden it, yet we live of the fruits of the tree of life. But I instance in two great things, in which human nature is greatly advanced, and passed on to greater perfections. The first is, that besides body and soul, which was the sum total of Adam’s constitution, God hath superadded to us a third principle, the beginner of a better life, I mean, the spirit : so that now man hath a spiritual and celestial nature breathed into him, and the old man, that is, the old constitution, is the least part, and in its proper operations is dead, or dying ; but the new man is that which gives denomination, life, motion, and proper actions to a Christian, and that is renewed in us day by day.—But secondly, human nature is so highly exalted and mended by that mercy, which God sent immediately upon the fall of Adam, the promise of Christ, that when he did come, and actuate the purposes of this mission, and ascended up into heaven, he carried human nature above the seats of angels, to the place whither ‘ Lucifer, the son of the morning,’ aspired to ascend, but in his attempt fell into hell.

2. To this, for the likeness of the matter, I add, that the Divine mercy hath so prosecuted us with the enlargement of his favours, that we are not only fellow ministers and servants with the angels, and, in our own nature in the person of Christ, exalted above them; but we also shall be their judges. And if this be not an honour above that of Joseph or Mordecai, an honour beyond all the measures of a man, then there are in honour no degrees, no priority or distances, or characters of fame and nobleness. Christ is the great Judge of all the world; his human nature shall then triumph over evil men and evil spirits; then shall the devils, those angels that fell from their first originals, be brought in their chains from their dark prisons, and once be allowed to see the light, that light that shall confound them; while all that follow the Lamb, and that are accounted worthy of that resurrection, shall be assessors in the judgment. "Know ye not," saith St Paul, "that ye shall judge angels?" And Tertullian, speaking concerning devils and accursed spirits, saith, "Those angels which we renounced in baptism, those we shall judge in the day of the Lord's glory, in the great day of recompenses." And that the honour may be yet greater, the same day of sentence that condemns the evil angels, shall also reward the good, and increase their glory: which because they derive from their Lord and ours, from their King and our elder Brother, 'the King of Glories,' whose glorious hands shall put the crown upon all our heads, we, who shall be servants of that judgment, and some way or other assist in it, have a part of that honour, to be judges of all angels, and of all the world. The effect of these things ought to be this, that we do not by base actions dishonour that nature, that sits upon the throne of God, that reigns over angels, that shall sit in judgment upon all the world. It is a great indecency that the son of a king should bear water upon his head, and dress vineyards among the slaves; or to see a wise man, and the guide of his country, drink drunk among the meanest of his servants: but when members of Christ shall be made members of a harlot, and that which rides above a rainbow, stoops to an imperious whorish woman; when the soul that is sister to the Lord of angels, shall degenerate into the foolishness or rage of a beast, being drowned with the blood of the grape, or made mad with passion, or ridiculous with weaker follies; we shall but strip ourselves of that robe of honour, with which Christ hath invested and adorned our nature; and carry that portion of humanity which is our own, and which God hath honoured in some capacities above angels,—into a portion of an eternal shame, and become less in all senses, and equally disgraced with devils. The shame and sting of this change shall be, that we turned the glories of the Divine mercy into the baseness of ingratitude, and the amazement of suffering the Divine vengeance. But I pass on.

3. The next order of Divine mercies that I shall remark, is also an improvement of our nature, or an appendage to it. For, whereas our constitution is weak, our souls apt to diminution and impede faculties, our bodies to mutilation and imperfection, to blindness and crookedness, to stammering and sorrows, to baldness and deformity, to evil conditions and accidents of body, and to passions and sadness of spirit; God hath, in his infinite mercy, provided for every condition rare suppletories of comfort and usefulness, to make recompense, and sometimes with an overrunning proportion, for those natural defects, which were apt to make our persons otherwise contemptible, and our conditions intolerable. God gives to bli: d

men better memories. For upon this account it is that Rufinus makes mention of Didymus of Alexandria, who, being blind, was blest with a rare attention and singular memory, and by prayer, and hearing, and meditating and discoursing, came to be one of the most excellent divines of that whole age. And it was more remarkable in Nicasius Mechliniensis, who, being blockish at his book, in his first childhood fell into accidental blindness, and from thence continually grew to so quick an apprehension and so tenacious a memory, that he became the wonder of his contemporaries, and was chosen rector of the college at Mechlin, and was made licentiate of theology at Louvain, and doctor of both the laws at Cologne, living and dying in great reputation for his rare parts and excellent learning. At the same rate also God deals with men in other instances: want of children he recompenses with freedom from care; and whatsoever evil happens to the body is, therefore, most commonly single and unaccompanied, because God accepts that evil as the punishment of the sin of the man, or the instrument of his virtue or his security, and it is reckoned as a sufficient antidote. God hath laid a severe law upon all women, that "in sorrow they shall bring forth children:" yet God hath so tempered that sorrow; that they think themselves more accursed, if they want that sorrow; and they have reason to rejoice in that state, the trouble of which is alleviated by a promise, that "they shall be saved in bearing children." He that wants one eye hath the force and vigorousness of both united in that which is left him: and whenever any man is afflicted with sorrow, his reason and his religion, himself and all his friends, persons that are civil and persons that are obliged, run in to comfort him; and he may, if he will observe wisely, find so many circumstances of ease and remission, so many designs of providence and studied favours, such contrivances of collateral advantage, and certain reserves of substantial and proper comfort, that in the whole sum of affairs it often happens, that a single cross is a double blessing, and that even in a temporal sense 'it is better to go to the house of mourning' than of joys and festival egressions. Is not the affliction of poverty better than the prosperity of a great and tempting fortune? Does not wisdom dwell in a mean estate and low spirit, retired thoughts, and under a sad roof? And is it not generally true, that sickness itself is appayed with religion and holy thoughts, with pious resolutions and penitential prayers, with returns to God and to sober counsels? And if this be true, that God sends sorrow to cure sin, and affliction be the handmaid to grace; it is also certain, that every sad contingency in nature is doubly recompensed with the advantages of religion, besides those intervening refreshments which support the spirit, and refresh its instruments. I shall need to instance but once more in this particular.

God hath sent no greater evil into the world, than that "in the sweat of our brows we shall eat our bread;" and in the difficulty and agony, in the sorrows and contention of our souls, we shall 'work out our salvation.' But see how in the first of these God hath outdone his own anger, and defeated the purposes of his wrath, by the inundation of his mercy; for this labour and sweat of our brows is so far from being a curse, that without it our very bread would not be so great a blessing. Is it not labour that makes the garlick and the pulse, the sycamore and the cresses, the cheese of the goats and the butter of the sheep, to be savoury and pleasant as the flesh of the roebuck, or the milk of the kine, the marrow of oxen, or the thighs of birds? If it were not for labour, men neither could eat so much, nor relish so

pleasantly, nor sleep so soundly, nor be so healthful nor so useful, so strong nor so patient, so noble, nor so untempted. And as God hath made us beholden to labour for the purchase of many good things, so the thing itself owes to labour many degrees of its worth and value. And, therefore, I need not reckon, that, besides these advantages, the mercies of God have found out proper and natural remedies for labour; nights to cure the sweat of the day,—sleep to ease our watchfulness,—rest to alleviate our burdens,—and days of religion to procure our rest: and things are so ordered, that labour is become a duty, and an act of many virtues, and is not so apt to turn into a sin as its contrary; and is therefore necessary, not only because we need it for making provision for our life, but even to ease the labour of our rest; there being no greater tediousness of spirit in the world than want of employment, and an inactive life: and the lazy man is not only unprofitable, but also accursed, and he groans under the load of his time; which yet passes over the active man light as a dream, or the feathers of a bird; while the unemployed is a disease, and like a long sleepless night to himself, and a load unto his country. And therefore, although, in this particular, God hath been so merciful in this infliction, that from the sharpness of the curse a very great part of mankind are freed, and there are myriads of people good and bad, who do not ‘eat their bread in the sweat of their brows;’ yet this is but an overrunning and an excess of the Divine mercy; God did more for us than we did absolutely need: for he hath so disposed of the circumstances of this curse, that man’s affections are so reconciled to it, that they desire it, and are delighted in it; and so the anger of God is ended in loving-kindness, and the drop of water is lost in the full chalice of the wine, and the curse is gone out into a multiplied blessing.

But then for the other part of the severe law and laborious imposition, that we must work out our spiritual interest with the labours of our spirit, seems to most men to be so intolerable, that, rather than pass under it, they quit their hopes of heaven, and pass into the portion of devils. And what can there be to alleviate this sorrow, that a man shall be perpetually solicited with an impure temper, and shall carry a flame within him, and all the world is on fire round about him, and every thing brings fuel to the flame, and full tables are a snare, and empty tables are collateral servants to a lust, and help to blow the fire and kindle the heap of prepared temptations; and yet a man must not at all taste of the forbidden fruit, and he must not desire what he cannot choose but desire, and he must not enjoy whatsoever he does violently covet, and must never satisfy his appetite in the most violent importunities, but must therefore deny himself, because to do so is extremely troublesome? This seems to be an art of torture, and a device to punish man with the spirit of agony, and a restless vexation. But this also hath in it a great ingredient of mercy, or rather is nothing else but a heap of mercy in its entire constitution. For, if it were not for this, we had nothing of our own to present to God, nothing proportionable to the great rewards of heaven, but either all men, or no man, must go thither; for nothing can distinguish man from man, in order to beatitude, but choice and election; and nothing can ennoble the choice but love, and nothing can exercise love but difficulty, and nothing can make that difficulty but the contradiction of our appetite, and the crossing of our natural affections. And, therefore, whenever any of you are tempted violently, or grow weary in your spirits with resisting the petulancy of temptation, you may be cured,

if you will please to remember and rejoice, that now you have something of your own to give to God, something that he will be pleased to accept, something that he hath given thee that thou mayest give it him: for our money and our time, our days of feasting and our days of sorrow, our discourse and our acts of praise, our prayers and our songs, our vows and our offerings, our worshippings and protestations, and whatsoever else can be accounted in the sum of our religion, are only accepted according as they bear along with them portions of our will, and choice of love, and appendant difficulty. So that whoever can complain that he serves God with pains and mortifications, he is troubled because there is a distinction of things such as we call virtue and vice, reward and punishment; and, if we will not suffer God to distinguish the first, he will certainly confound the latter; and his portion shall be blackness without variety, and punishment shall be his reward.

4. As an appendage to this instance of Divine mercy, we are to account that, not only in nature, but in contingency and emergent events of providence, God makes compensation to us for all the evils of chance and hostilities of accident, and brings good out of evil; which is that solemn triumph which mercy makes over justice, when it rides upon a cloud, and crowns its darkness with a robe of glorious light. God indeed suffered Joseph to be sold a bond-slave into Egypt, but then it was that God intended to crown and reward his chastity; for by that means he brought him to a fair condition of dwelling, and there gave him a noble trial; he had a brave contention, and he was a conqueror. Then God sent him to prison; but still that was mercy; it was to make way to bring him to Pharaoh's court. And God brought famine upon Canaan, and troubled all the souls of Jacob's family: and there was a plot laid for another mercy; this was to bring them to see and partake of Joseph's glory. And then God brought a great evil upon their posterity, and they groaned under taskmasters: but this God changed into the miracles of his mercy, and suffered them to be afflicted that he might do ten miracles for their sakes, and proclaim to all the world how dear they were to God. And was not the greatest good to mankind brought forth from the greatest treason that ever was committed,—the redemption of the world, from the fact of Judas? God loving to defeat the malice of man and the arts of the devil by rare emergencies and stratagems of mercy. It is a sad calamity to see a kingdom spoiled, and a church afflicted; the priests slain with the sword, and the blood of nobles mingled with cheaper sand; religion made a cause of trouble, and the best men most cruelly persecuted; government confounded, and laws ashamed; judges decreeing causes in fear and covetousness, and the ministers of holy things setting themselves against all that is sacred, and setting fire upon the fields, and turning in 'little foxes' on purpose to 'destroy the vineyards.' And what shall make recompense for this heap of sorrows, whenever God shall send such swords of fire? Even the mercies of God, which then will be made public, when we shall hear such afflicted people sing, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion," with the voice of joy and festival eucharist, "among such as keep holy day;" and when peace shall become sweeter, and dwell the longer. And in the mean time it serves religion, and the affliction shall try the children of God, and God shall crown them, and men shall grow wiser and more holy, and leave their petty interests, and take sanctuary in holy living, and be taught temperance by their want,

and patience by their suffering, and charity by their persecution, and shall better understand the duty of their relations; and, at last, the secret worm that lay at the root of the plant, shall be drawn forth and quite extinguished. For so have I known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the wine-press, and a faint return to his heart, which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage: but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and made it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy bunches, and made accounts of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. So is an afflicted province cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins, and bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness; and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire had purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and the cloud into a perfume, the sword into a staff, and his anger into mercy.

Had not David suffered more, if he had suffered less? and had he not been miserable, unless he had been afflicted? He understood it well, when he said, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted." He that was rival to Crassus when he stood candidate to command the legions in the Parthian war, was much troubled that he missed the dignity; but he saw himself blessed that he escaped the death, and the dishonour of the overthrow, by the time the sad news arrived at Rome. The gentleman at Marseilles cursed his stars, that he was absent when the ship set sail to sea, having long waited for a wind, and missed it; but he gave thanks to the Providence that blessed him with the cross, when he knew that the ship perished in the voyage, and all the men were drowned. And even those virgins and barren women in Jerusalem that longed to become glad mothers, and for want of children would not be comforted, yet, when Titus sacked the city, found the words of Jesus true, "Blessed is the womb that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck." And the world being governed with a rare variety, and changes of accidents and providence; that which is a misfortune in the particular, in the whole order of things becomes a blessing bigger than we hoped for, then when we were angry with God for hindering us to perish in pleasant ways, or when he was contriving to pour upon thy head a mighty blessing. Do not think the judge condemns you, when he chides you; nor think to read thy own final sentence by the first half of his words. Stand still, and see how it will be in the whole event of things: let God speak his mind out; for it may be this sad beginning is but an art to bring in, or to make thee to esteem, and entertain, and understand the blessing.

They that love to talk of the mercies of the Lord, and to recount his good things, cannot but have observed that God delights to be called by such appellatives, which relate to miserable and afflicted persons: he is 'the Father of the fatherless,' and an 'Avenger of the widow's cause;' 'he standeth at the right hand of the poor, to save his soul from unrighteous judges;' and 'he is with us in tribulation.' And upon this ground let us account whether mercy be not the greater ingredient in that death and deprivation, when I lose a man, and get God to be my Father; and when my weak arm of flesh is cut from my shoulder, and God makes me to lean upon him, and becomes my Patron and my Guide, my Advocate and Defender.

And if, in our greatest misery, God's mercy is so conspicuous, what can we suppose him to be in the endearment of his loving-kindness? If his evil be so transparent, well may we know that upon his face dwells glory, and from his eyes light and perpetual comforts run in channels larger than the returns of the sea, when it is driven and forced faster into its natural course by the violence of a tempest from the north. The sum is this: God intends every accident should minister to virtue, and every virtue is the mother and the nurse of joy, and both of them daughters of the Divine goodness; and, therefore, if our sorrows do not pass into comforts, it is beside God's intention; it is because we will not comply with the act of that mercy, which would save us by all means and all varieties, by health and by sickness, by the life and by the death of our dearest friends, by what we choose and by what we fear; that as God's providence rules over all chances of things and all desigus of men, so his mercy may rule over all his providence.

5. God having, by these means, secured us from the evils of nature and contingencies, and represented himself to be our Father, which is the greatest endearment, and tie, and expression of a natural, unalterable, and essential kindness; he next makes provisions for us to supply all those necessities which himself hath made. For even to make necessities was a great circumstance of the mercy; and all the relishes of wine, and the savouriness of meat, the sweet and the fat, the pleasure and the satisfaction, the restitution of spirits and the strengthening of the heart, are not owing to the liver of the vine or the kidneys of wheat, to the blood of the grape or the strength of the corn, but to the appetite or the necessity: and therefore it is, that he that sits at a full table, and does not recreate his stomach with fasting, and let his digestion rest, and place himself in the advantages of nature's intervals,—he loses the blessing of his daily bread, and leans upon his table as a sick man upon his bed, or the lion in the grass, which he cannot feed on: but he that wants it, and sits down when nature gives the sign, rejoices in the health of his hunger, and the taste of his meat, and the strengthening of his spirit, and gives God thanks, while his bones and his flesh rejoice in the provisions of nature and the blessing of God. Are not the imperfections of infancy and the decays of old age the evils of our nature, because respectively they want desire, and they want gust and relish, and reflections upon their acts of sense? and “when desire fails, presently the mourners go about the streets.”* But then, that those desires are so provided for by nature and art, by ordinary and extraordinary, by foresight and contingency, according to necessity and up unto convenience, until we arrive at abundance, is a chain of mercies larger than the bow in the clouds, and richer than the trees of Eden, which were permitted to feed our miserable father. Is not all the earth our orchard and our granary, our vineyard and our garden of pleasure? and the face of the sea is our traffic, and the bowels of the sea is our vivarium, a place for fish to feed us, and to serve some other collateral appendant needs; and all the face of heaven is a repository for influences and breath, fruitful showers and fair refreshments. And when God made provision for his other creatures, he gave it of one kind, and with variety no greater than the changes of day and night, one devouring the other, or sitting down with his draught of blood, or walking upon his portion of grass: but man hath all the food of beasts, and all

* Eccles. xii.

the beasts themselves that are fit for food, and the food of angels, and the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth; and every part of his body hath a provision made for it: and the smoothness of the olive and the juice of the vine refresh the heart and make the face cheerful, and serve the ends of joy and the festivity of man; and are not only to cure hunger or to allay thirst, but to appease a passion, and allay a sorrow. It is an infinite variety of meat, with which God furnishes out the table of mankind. And in the covering our sin, and clothing our nakedness, God passed from fig-leaves to the skins of beasts, from aprons to long robes, from leather to wool, and from thence to the warmth of furs, and the coolness of silks; he hath dressed not only our needs, but hath fitted the several portions of the year, and made us to go dressed like our mother, leaving off the winter sables when the florid spring appears; and as soon as the tulip fades, we put on the robe of summer, and then shear our sheep for winter: and God uses us as Joseph did his brother Benjannin; we have many changes of raiment, and our mess is five times bigger than the provision made for our brothers of the creation. But the providence and mercies of God are to be estimated also according as these provisions are dispensed to every single person. For that I may not remark the bounties of God running over the tables of the rich, God hath also made provisions for the poorest person; so that if they can but rule their desires, they shall have their tables furnished. And this is secured and provided for by one promise and two duties, by our own labour and our brother's charity: and our faith in this affair is confirmed by all our own, and by all the experience of other men. Are not all the men and the women of the world provided for, and fed, and clothed, till they die? And was it not always so from the first morning of their creation? And that a man is starved to death, is a violence and a rare contingency, happening almost as seldom as for a man to have but one eye; and if our being provided for be as certain as for a man to have two eyes, we have reason to adore the wisdom and admire the mercies of our almighty Father. But these things are evident. Is it not a great thing that God hath made such strange provisions for our health—such infinite differences of plants—and hath discovered the secrets of their nature by mere chance, or by inspiration? Either of which is the miracle of Providence, secret to us, but ordered by certain and regular decrees of Heaven. It was a huge diligence and care of the Divine mercy that discovered to man the secrets of spagyric medicines, of stones, of spirits, and the results of seven or eight decoctions, and the strange effects of accidental mixtures, which the art of man could not suspect, being bound up in the secret sanctuary of hidden causes and secret natures, and being laid open by the concurrence of twenty or thirty little accidents, all which were ordered by God as certainly as are the first principles of nature, or the descent of sons from the fathers in the most noble families.

But that which I shall observe in this whole affair is, that there are, both for the provision of our tables and the relief of our sicknesses, so many miracles of Providence, that they give plain demonstration what relation we bear to heaven: and the poor man need not be troubled that he is to expect his daily portion after the sun is up; for he hath found to this day he was not deceived; and then he may rejoice, because he sees, by an effective probation, that in heaven a decree was made, every day to send him provisions of meat and drink. And that is a mighty mercy, when the cir-

cles of heaven are bowed down to wrap us in a bosom of care and nourishment, and the wisdom of God is daily busied to serve his mercy, as his mercy serves our necessities. Does not God plant remedies there, where the diseases are most popular? and every country is best provided against its own evils. Is not the rhubarb found, where the sun most corrupts the liver; and the scabious by the shore of the sea, that God might cure as soon as he wounds? and the inhabitants may see their remedy against the leprosy and the scurvy, before they feel their sickness. And then to this we may add nature's commons and open fields, the shores of rivers and the strand of the sea, the unconfined air, the wilderness that hath no hedge; and that in these every man may hunt and fowl, and fish, respectively; and that God sends some miracles and extraordinary blessings so for the public good, that he will not endure they should be enclosed and made several. Thus he is pleased to dispense the manna of Calabria, the medicinal waters of Germany, the muscles at Sluys at this day, and the Egyptian beans in the marshes of Albania, and the salt at Troas of old; which God, to defeat the covetousness of man, and to spread his mercy over the face of the indigent, as the sun scatters his beams over the bosom of the whole earth, did so order, that as long as every man was permitted to partake, the bosom of heaven was open; but when man gathered them into single handfuls, and made them impropriate, God gathered his hand into his bosom, and bound the heavens with ribs of brass, and the earth with decrees of iron; and the blessing reverted to him that gave it, since *they* might not receive it to whom it was sent. And in general, this is the excellency of this mercy, that all our needs are certainly supplied and secured by a promise which God cannot break: but he that cannot break the laws of his own promises can break the laws of nature, that he may perform his promise, and he will do a miracle rather than forsake thee in thy needs: so that our security, and the relative mercy is bound upon us by all the power and the truth of God.

6. But because such is the bounty of God, that he hath provided a better life for the inheritance of man, if God is so merciful in making fair provisions for our less noble part, in order to the transition toward our country, we may expect that the mercies of God have rare arts to secure to us his designed bounty in order to our inheritance, to that which ought to be our portion for ever. And here I consider, that it is an infinite mercy of the almighty Father of mercies, that he hath appointed to us such a religion, that leads us to a huge felicity through pleasant ways. For the felicity that is designed to us, is so above our present capacities and conceptions, that while we are so ignorant, as not to understand it, we are also so foolish as not to desire it with passions great enough to perform the little conditions of its purchase. God, therefore, knowing how great an interest it is, and how apt we should be to neglect it, hath found out such conditions of acquiring it, which are eases and satisfaction to our present appetites. God hath bound our salvation upon us by the endearment of temporal prosperities; and because we love this world so well, God hath so ordered it, that even this world may secure the other. And of this, God in old times made open profession: for when he had secretly designed to bring his people to a glorious immortality in another world, he told them nothing of that, it being a thing bigger than the capacity of their thoughts, or of their theology; but told them that which would tempt them most, and endear obedience:

'If you will obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land : ' ye shall possess a rich country, ye shall triumph over your enemies, ye shall have numerous families, blessed children, rich granaries, overrunning wine-presses. For God knew the cognation of most of them was so dear between their affections and the good things of this world, that if they did not obey in hope of that they did need, and fancy, and love, and see, and feel,—it was not to be expected they should quit their affections for a secret in another world, whither before they come, they must die, and lose all desire, and all capacities of enjoyment. But this design of God, which was barefaced in the days of the law, is now in the Gospel interwoven secretly (but yet plain enough to be discovered by an eye of faith and reason,) into every virtue ; and temporal advantage is a great ingredient in the constitution of every Christian grace. For so the richest tissue dazzles the beholder's eye, when the sun reflects upon the metal, the silver and the gold weaved into fantastic imagery, or a weakly plainness ; but the rich wire and shining filaments are wrought upon cheaper silk, the spoil of worms and flies : so is the embroidery of our virtue. The glories of the Spirit dwell upon the face and vestment, upon the fringes and the borders, and there we see the beryl and the onyx, the jasper and the sardonyx, order and perfection, love, and peace, and joy, mortification of the passions and ravishment of the will, adherences to God and imitation of Christ, reception and entertainment of the Holy Ghost, and longings after heaven, humility and chastity, temperance and sobriety ; these make the frame of the garment, the clothes of the soul, that it may not be found naked in the day of the Lord's visitation ; but through these rich materials a thread of silk is drawn, some compliance with worms and weaker creatures, something that shall please our bowels, and make the lower man to rejoice ; they are wrought upon secular content and material satisfactions : and now we cannot be happy unless we be pious, and the religion of a Christian is the greatest security, and the most certain instrument of making a man rich, and pleasing, and healthful, and wise, and beloved in the whole world. I shall now remark only two or three instances ; for the main body of this truth I have other where represented.

1. The whole religion of a Christian, as it relates to others, is nothing but justice and mercy, certain parents of peace and benefit : and upon this supposition, what evil can come to a just and a merciful, to a necessary and useful person ? For the first permission of evil was upon the stock of injustice. He that kills may be killed, and he that does injury may be mischieved ; he that invades another man's right, must venture the loss of his own ; and when I put my brother to his defence, he may chance drive the evil so far from himself, that it may reach me. Laws and judges, private and public judicatures, wars and tribunals, axes and wheels, were made, not for the righteous, but for the unjust ; and all that whole order of things and persons would be useless, if men did do as they would willingly suffer.

2. And because there is no evil, that can befall a just man, unless it comes by injury and violence, our religion hath also made as good provisions against that too, as the nature of the thing will suffer. For by patience we are reconciled to the sufferance, and by hope and faith we see a certain consequent reward ; and by praying for the persecuting man we are cured of all the evil of the mind, the envy and the fretfulness that uses to gall the troubled and resisting man : and when we turn all the passion into charity, and God

turns all the suffering into reward, there remains nothing that is very formidable. So that our religion obliges us to such duties which prevent all evils that happen justly to men ; and in our religion no man can suffer as a malefactor, if he follows the religion truly : and for the evils that are unavoidable and come by violence, the graces of this discipline turn them into virtues and rewards, and make them that in their event they are desirable, and in the suffering they are very tolerable.

3. But then when we consider that the religion of a Christian consists in doing good to all men ; that it is made up of mercies and friendships, of friendly conventions and assemblies of saints ; that all are to do good works for necessary uses, that is, to be able to be beneficial to the public, and not to be burdensome to any, where it can be avoided ; what can be wished to men in relation to others, and what can be more beneficial to themselves, than that they be such whom other men will value for their interest, such whom the public does need, such whom princes and nobles should esteem, and all men can make use of according to their several conditions ; that they are so well provided for, that, unless a persecution disables them, they can not only maintain themselves, but oblige others to their charity ? This is a temporal good, which all wise men reckon as part of that felicity which recompenses all the labours of their day, and sweetens the sleep of their night, and places them in that circle of neighbourhood and amity, where men are most valued and most secure.

4. To this we may add this material consideration : That all those graces, which oblige us to do good to others, are nothing else but certain instruments of doing advantage to ourselves. It is a huge nobleness of charity to give alms, not only to our brother, but for him. It is the Christian sacrifice, like that of Job, who made oblations for his sons when they feasted each other, fearing lest they had sinned against God. And if I give alms, and fast, and pray, in behalf of my prince or my patron, my friend or my children, I do a combination of holy actions ; which are, of all things that I can do, the most effectual intercession for him whom I so recommend. But then observe the art of this, and what a plot is laid by the Divine mercy, to secure blessing to ourselves. That I am a person fit to intercede and pray for him, must suppose me a gracious person, one whom God rather will accept : so that, before I be fit to pray and interpose for him, I must first become dear to God ; and my charity can do him no good, for whose interest I gave it, but by making me first acceptable to God, that so he may the rather hear me. And when I fast, it is first an act of repentance for myself, before it can be an instrument of impetration for him. And thus I do my brother a single benefit, by doing myself a double one. And it is also so ordered, that when I pray for a person for whom God will not hear me, yet then he will hear me for myself, though I say nothing in my own behalf : and our prayers are like Jonathan's arrows ; if they fall short, yet they return my friend or my friendship to me ; or if they go home, they secure him whom they pray for ; and I have not only the comfort of rejoicing with him, but the honour and the reward of procuring him a joy. And certain it is, that the charitable prayer for another can never want what it asks, or, instead of it, a greater blessing. The good man,—that saw his poor brother troubled, because he had nothing to present for an offering at the holy communion, (when all knew themselves obliged to do kindness for Christ's poor members, with which themselves were incorporated with so mys-

terious a union,) and gave him money, that he might present for the good of his soul, as other Christians did,—had not only the reward of alms, but of religion too; and that offering is well husbanded, for it did benefit to two souls. For as I sin when I make another sin; so if I help him to do a good, I am sharer in the gains of that talent; and he shall not have the less, but I shall be rewarded upon his stock. And this was it which David rejoiced in: “I am a partner, a companion, of all them that fear thee;” I share in their profits. If I do but rejoice at every grace of God which I see in my brother, I shall be rewarded for that grace. And we need not envy the excellency of another: it becomes mine as well as his; and if I do rejoice, I shall have cause to rejoice. So excellent, so full, so artificial is the mercy of God, in making, and seeking, and finding all occasions to do us good.

5. The very charity, and love, and mercy, that is commanded in our religion, is in itself a great excellency; not only in order to heaven, but to the comforts of the earth too, and such, without which a man is not capable of a blessing or a comfort. And he that sent charity and friendships into the world, intended charity to be as relative as justice, and to do its effect both upon the loving and the beloved person. It is a reward and a blessing to a kind father, when his children do well; and every degree of prudent love which he bears to them, is an endearment of his joy; and he that loves them not, but looks upon them as burdens of necessity and loads to his fortune, loses those many rejoicings, and the pleasure of kindness which they feast withal, who love to divide their fortunes amongst them, because they have already divided large and equal portions of their heart. I have instanced in this relation; but it is true in all the excellency of friendship: and every man rejoices twice, when he hath a partner of his joy. A friend shares my sorrow, and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy, and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river, and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable, and apt to be drunk up at the first revels of the Syrian star; but two torches do not divide, but increase the flame. And though my tears are the sooner dried up, when they run upon my friend’s cheeks in the furrows of compassion; yet when my flame hath kindled his lamp, we unite the glories, and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God; because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy.

And now, upon this account, which is already so great, I need not reckon concerning the collateral issues and little streams of comfort, which God hath made to issue from that religion to which God hath obliged us; such as are mutual comforts—visiting sick people,—instructing the ignorant,—and so becoming better instructed, and fortified, and comforted ourselves, by the instruments of our brother’s ease and advantages;—the glories of converting souls, of rescuing a sinner from hell, of a miserable man from the grave,—the honour and nobleness of being a good man,—the noble confidence and the bravery of innocence,—the ease of patience,—the quiet of contentedness,—the rest of peacefulness,—the worthiness of forgiving others,—the greatness of spirit that is in despising riches,—and the sweetness of spirit that is in meekness and humility;—these are Christian graces in every sense; favours of God, and issues of his bounty and his mercy. But all that I shall now observe farther concerning them is this: that God hath made these necessary; he hath obliged us to have them, under pain of

damnation ; he hath made it so sure to us to become happy even in this world, that if we will not, he hath threatened to destroy us ; which is not a desire or aptness to do us an evil, but an art to make it impossible that we should. For God hath so ordered it, that we cannot perish, unless we desire it ourselves ; and unless we will do ourselves a mischief on purpose to get hell, we are secured of heaven : and there is not in the nature of things any way that can more infallibly do the work of felicity upon creatures that can choose, than to make that which they should naturally choose, be spiritually their duty ; and then he will make them happy hereafter, if they will suffer him to make them happy here. But hard by stand another throng of mercies, that must be considered by us, and God must be glorified in them ; for they are such as are intended to preserve to us all this felicity.

9. God, that he might secure our duty and our present and consequent felicity, hath tied us with golden chains, and bound us, not only with the bracelets of love and the deliciousness of hope, but with the ruder cords of fear and reverence ; even with all the innumerable parts of a restraining grace. For it is a huge aggravation of human calamity to consider, that after a man hath been instructed in the love and advantages of his religion, and knows it to be the way of honour and felicity, and that to prevaricate its holy sanctions is certain death and disgrace to eternal ages ; yet that some men shall despise their religion, others shall be very wary of its laws, and call the commandments a burden ; and too many, with a perfect choice, shall delight in death, and the ways that lead thither ; and they choose money infinitely, and to rule over their brother by all means, and to be revenged extremely, and to prevail by wrong, and to do all that they can, and please themselves in all that they desire, and love it fondly, and be restless in all things but where they perish. If God should not interpose by the arts of a miraculous and merciful grace, and put a bridle in the mouth of our lusts, and chastise the sea of our follies by some heaps of sand or the walls of a rock, we should perish in the deluge of sin universally ; as the old world did in that storm of the Divine anger, ‘ the flood of waters.’ But thus God suffers but few adulteries in the world, in respect of what would be, if all men that desire to be adulterers had power and opportunity. And yet some men, and very many women, are, by modesty and natural shamefacedness, chastised in their too forward appetites ; or the laws of man, or public reputation, or the indecency and unhandsome circumstances of sin, check the desire, and make it that it cannot arrive at act. For so have I seen a busy flame sitting upon a sullen coal, turn its point to all the angles and portions of its neighbourhood, and reach at a heap of prepared straw, which, like a bold temptation, called it to a restless motion and activity ; but either it was at too big a distance, or a gentle breath from heaven diverted the sphere and the ray of the fire to the other side, and so prevented the violence of the burning : till the flame expired in a weak consumption, and died, turning into smoke, and the coolness of death, and the harmlessness of a cinder. And when a man’s desires are winged with sails and a lusty wind of passion, and pass on in a smooth channel of opportunity, God oftentimes hinders the lust and the impatient desire from passing on to its port, and entering into action, by a sudden thought, by a little remembrance of a word, by a fancy, by a sudden disability, by unreasonable and unlikely fears, by the sudden intervening of company, by the very weariness of the passion, by curiosity, by want of health, by the too

great violence of the desire, bursting itself with its fulness into dissolution and a remiss easiness, by a sentence of Scripture, by the reverence of a good man, or else by the proper interventions of the Spirit of grace, chastising the crime, and representing its appendant mischiefs, and its constituent disorder and irregularity; and after all this, the very anguish and trouble of being defeated in the purpose, hath rolled itself into so much uneasiness and unquiet reflections, that the man is grown ashamed, and vexed into more sober counsels.

And the mercy of God is not less than infinite, in separating men from the occasions of their sin, from the neighbourhood and temptation. For if the hyæna and a dog should be thrust into the same kennel, one of them would soon find a grave, and, it may be, both of them their death. So infallible is the ruin of most men, if they be showed a temptation. Nitre and resin, naphtha and bitumen, sulphur and pitch, are their constitution; and the fire passes upon them infinitely, and there is none to secure them. But God, by removing our sins far from us, 'as far as the east is from the west,' not only putting away the guilt, but setting the occasion far from us, extremely far—so far that sometimes we cannot sin, and many times not easily,—hath magnified his mercy, by giving us safety in all those measures in which we are untempted. It would be the matter of new discourses, if I should consider concerning the variety of God's grace; his preventing and accompanying, his inviting and corroborating grace; his assisting us to will, his enabling us to do; his sending angels to watch us, to remove us from evil company, to drive us with swords of fire from forbidden instances, to carry us by unobserved opportunities into holy company, to minister occasions of holy discourses, to make it by some means or other necessary to do a holy action, to make us in love with virtue, because they have mingled that virtue with a just and a fair interest; to some men, by making religion that thing they live upon; to others, the means of their reputation and the securities of their honour, and thousands of ways more, which every prudent man that watches the ways of God, cannot but have observed. But I must also observe other great conjugations of mercy; for he that is to pass through an infinite, must not dwell upon every little line of life.

10. The next order of mercies is such which is of so pure and unmingled constitution, that it hath at first no regard to the capacities and dispositions of the receivers; and afterwards, when it hath, it relates only to such conditions, which itself creates and produces in the suscipient; I mean, the mercies of the divine predestination. For was it not an infinite mercy, that God should predestinate mankind to salvation by Jesus Christ, even when he had no other reason to move him to do it, but because man was miserable, and needed his pity? But I shall instance only in the intermedial part of this mysterious mercy. Why should God cause us to be born of Christian parents, and not to be circumcised by the impure hands of a Turkish priest? What distinguished me from another, that my father was severe in his discipline, and careful to "bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and I was not exposed to the carelessness of an irreligious guardian, and taught to steal and lie, and to make sport with my infant vices and beginnings of iniquity? Who was it that discerned our persons from the lot of dying chrysome, whose portion must be among those who never glorified God with a free obedience? What had you done of

good, or towards it, that you were not condemned to that stupid ignorance, which makes the souls of most men to be little higher than beasts; and who understand nothing of religion and noble principles, of parables and wise sayings of old men? And not only in our cradles, but in our schools and our colleges, in our friendships and in our marriages, in our enmities and in all our conversation, in our virtues and in our vices, where all things in us were equal, or else we were the inferior, there is none of us but have felt the mercies of many differences. Or it may be, my brother and I were intemperate, and drunk, and quarrelsome, and he killed a man; but God did not suffer me to do so: he fell down and died with a little disorder; I was a beast, and yet was permitted to live, and not yet to die in my sins: he did amiss once, and was surprised in that disadvantage; I sin daily, and am still invited to repentance: he would fain have lived and amended; I neglect the grace, but am allowed the time. And when God sends the angel of his wrath to execute his anger upon a sinful people, we are encompassed with funerals, and yet the angel hath not smitten us. What or who makes the difference? We shall then see, when, in the separations of eternity, we sitting in glory shall see some of the partners of our sins carried into despair and the portions of the left hand, and roaring in the seats of the reprobate; we shall then perceive that it is even that mercy which hath no cause but itself, no measure of its emanation but our misery, no natural limit but eternity, no beginning but God, no object but man, no reason but an essential and an unalterable goodness, no variety but our necessity and capacity, no change but new instances of its own nature, no ending or repentance, but our absolute and obstinate refusal to entertain it.

There are very many more orders and conjugations of mercies; but because the numbers of them naturally tend to their own greatness, that is, to have no measure, I must reckon but a few more, and them also without order: for that they do descend upon us, we see and feel, but by what order of things or causes, is as undiscerned as the head of Nilus, or a sudden remembrance of a long-neglected and forgotten proposition.

11. But upon this account it is that good men have observed, that the providence of God is so great a provider for holy living, and does so certainly minister to religion, that nature and chance, the order of the world and the influences of heaven, are taught to serve the ends of the Spirit of God and the spirit of a man. I do not speak of the miracles that God hath, in the several periods of the world, wrought for the establishing his laws, and confirming his promises, and securing our obedience; though that was, all the way, the overflowings and miracles of mercy, as well as power: but that which I consider is, that besides the extraordinary emanations of the divine power upon the first and most solemn occasions of an institution, and the first beginnings of a religion, (such as were the wonders God did in Egypt and in the wilderness, preparatory to the sanction of that law and the first covenant, and the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, for the founding and the building up the religion of the gospel and the new covenant), God does also do things wonderful and miraculous, for the promoting the ordinary and less solemn actions of our piety, and to assist and accompany them in a constant and regular succession. It was a strange variety of natural efficacies, that manna should stink in twenty-four hours, if gathered upon Wednesday and Thursday, and that it should last till forty-eight hours, if gathered upon the even of the Sabbath; and that it

should last many hundreds of years, when placed in the sanctuary by the ministry of the high-priest. But so it was in the Jews' religion : and manna pleased every palate, and it filled all appetites, and the same measure was a different proportion, it was much and it was little ; as if nature, that it might serve religion, had been taught some measures of infinity, which is everywhere and nowhere, filling all things, and circumscribed with nothing, measured by one omer, and doing the work of two ; like the crowns of kings, fitting the brows of Nimrod and the most mighty warrior, and yet not too large for the temples of an infant prince. And not only is it thus in nature, but in contingencies and acts depending upon the choice of men ; for God having commanded the sons of Israel to go up to Jerusalem to worship thrice every year, and to leave their borders to be guarded by women, and children, and sick persons, in the neighbourhood of diligent and spiteful enemies, yet God so disposed of their hearts and opportunities, that they never entered the land when the people were at their solemnity, until they desecrated their rites, by doing at their passover the greatest sin and treason in the world. Till at Easter they crucified the Lord of life and glory, they were secure in Jerusalem and in their borders ; but when they had destroyed religion by this act, God took away their security, and Titus besieged the city at the feast of Easter, that the more might perish in the deluge of the divine indignation.

To this observation the Jews add, that in Jerusalem no man ever had a fall that came thither to worship ; that at their solemn festivals, there was reception in the town for all the inhabitants of the land ; concerning which, although I cannot affirm any thing, yet this is certain, that no godly person, among all the tribes of Israel, was ever a beggar, but all the variety of human chances were overruled to the purposes of providence, and providence was measured by the ends of the religion, and the religion which promised them plenty, performed the promise, till the nation and the religion too began to decline, that it might give place to a better ministry, and a more excellent dispensation of the things of the world.

But when the Christian religion was planted, and had taken root, and had filled all lands, then all the nature of things, the whole creation, became servant to the kingdom of grace ; and the head of the religion is also the head of the creatures, and ministers all the things of the world in order to the Spirit of grace : and now "angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the good of them that fear the Lord ;" and all the violences of men, and things of nature and choice, are forced into subjection and lowest ministries, and to co-operate, as with a united design, to verify all the promises of the Gospel, and to secure and advantage all the children of the kingdom : and now he that is made poor by chance or persecution, is made rich by religion ; and he that hath nothing, yet possesses all things : and sorrow itself is the greatest comfort, not only because it ministers to virtue, but because itself is one, as in the case of repentance ; and death ministers to life, and bondage is freedom, and loss is gain, and our enemies are our friends, and every thing turns into religion, and religion turns into felicity and all manner of advantages. But that I may not need to enumerate any more particulars in this observation, certain it is, that angels of light and darkness, all the influences of heaven, and the fruits and productions of the earth, the stars and the elements, the secret things that lie in the bowels of the sea and the entrails of the earth, the single effects of all

efficients, and the conjunction of all causes, all events foreseen and all rare contingencies, every thing of chance, and every thing of choice, is so much a servant to him whose greatest desire and great interest is, by all means, to save our souls, that we are thereby made sure, that all the whole creation shall be made to bend, in all the flexures of its nature and accidents, that it may minister to religion, to the good of the catholic church, and every person within its bosom, who are the body of him that rules over all the world, and commands them as he chooses.

12. But that which is next to this, and not much unlike the design of this wonderful mercy, is, that all the actions of religion, though mingled with circumstances of differing, and sometimes of contradictory relations, are so concentrated in God their proper centre, and conducted in such certain and pure channels of reason and rule, that no one duty does contradict another; and it can never be necessary for any man, in any case, to sin. They that bound themselves by an oath to kill Paul, were not environed with the sad necessities of murder on one side, and vow-breach on the other, so that if they did murder him, they were man-slayers, if they did not, they were perjured; for God had made provision for this case, that no unlawful oath should pass an obligation. He that hath given his faith in unlawful confederation against his prince, is not girded with a fatal necessity of breach of trust on one side, or breach of allegiance on the other; for in this also God hath secured the case of conscience, by forbidding any man to make an unlawful promise; and, upon a stronger degree of the same reason, by forbidding him to keep it, in case he hath made it. He that doubts whether it be lawful to keep the Sunday holy, must not do it during that doubt, because ‘whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.’ But yet God’s mercy hath taken care to break this snare in sunder, so that he may neither sin against the commandment, nor against his conscience; for he is bound to lay aside his error, and be better instructed; till when, the scene of his sin lies in something that hath influence upon his understanding, not in the omission of the fact. “No man can serve two masters,” but therefore “he must hate the one, and cleave to the other.” But then if we consider what infinite contradiction there is in sin, and that the great long-suffering of God is expressed in this, that God ‘suffered the contradiction of sinners,’ we shall feel the mercy of God in the peace of our consciences and the unity of religion, so long as we do the work of God. It is a huge affront to a covetous man, that he is the farther off from fulness by having great heaps and vast revenues; and that his thirst increases by having that which should quench it; and that the more he shall need to be satisfied, the less he shall dare to do it; and that he shall refuse to drink because he is dry; that he dies if he tastes, and languishes if he does not; and at the same time he is full and empty, bursting with a plethora, and consumed with hunger, drowned with rivers of oil and wine, and yet dry as the Arabian sands. But then the contradiction is multiplied, and the labyrinths more amazed, when prodigality waits upon another curse, and covetousness heaps up, that prodigality may scatter abroad; then distractions are infinite, and a man hath two devils to serve of contradictory designs, and both of them exacting obedience more unreasonably than the Egyptian taskmasters; then there is no rest, no end of labours, no satisfaction of purposes, no method of things; but they begin where they should end, and begin again; and never pass forth to content, or reason, or quietness, or possession. But the

duty of a Christian is easy in a persecution, it is clear under a tyranny, it is evident in despite of heresy, it is one in the midst of schism, it is determined amongst infinite disputes ; being like a rock in the sea, which is beaten with the tide, and washed with retiring waters, and encompassed with mists, and appears in several figures, but it always dips its foot in the same bottom, and remains the same in calms and storms, and survives the revolution of ten thousand tides, and there shall dwell till time and tides shall be no more. So is our duty, uniform and constant, open and notorious, variously represented, but in the same manner exacted ; and in the interest of our souls God hath not exposed us to uncertainty, or the variety of any thing that can change ; and it is by the grace and mercy of God, put into the power of every Christian, to do that which God, through Jesus Christ, will accept to salvation ; and neither men nor devils shall hinder it, unless we list ourselves.

13. After all this, we may sit down and reckon by great sums and conjugations of his gracious gifts, and tell the minutes of eternity by the number of the divine mercies. God hath given his laws to rule us, his word to instruct us, his Spirit to guide us, his angels to protect us, his ministers to exhort us : he revealed all our duty, and he hath concealed whatsoever can hinder us : he hath affrighted our follies with fear of death, and engaged our watchfulness by its secret coming : he hath exercised our faith by keeping private the state of souls departed, and yet hath confirmed our faith by a promise of a resurrection, and entertained our hope by some general significations of the state of interval. His mercies make contemptible means instrumental to great purposes, and a small herb the remedy of the greatest diseases. He impedes the devil's rage, and infatuates his counsels ; he diverts his malice, and defeats his purposes ; he binds him in the chain of darkness, and gives him no power over the children of light ; he suffers him to walk in solitary places, and yet fetters him that he cannot disturb the sleep of a child ; he hath given him mighty power, and yet a young maiden that resists him, shall make him flee away ; he hath given him a vast knowledge, and yet an ignorant man can confute him with the twelve articles of his creed ; he gave him power over the winds, and made him prince of the air, and yet the breath of a holy prayer can drive him as far as the utmost sea ; and he hath so restrained him, that (except it be by faith) we know not whether there be any devil, yea or no ; for we never heard his noises, nor have seen his affrighting shapes. This is that great principle of all the felicity we hope for, and of all the means thither, and of all the skill and all the strengths we have to use those means. He hath made great variety of conditions, and yet hath made all necessary, and all mutual helpers ; and by some instruments, and in some respects, they are all equal in order to felicity, to content, and final and intermedial satisfactions. He gave us part of our reward in hand, that he might enable us to work for more ; he taught the world arts for use, arts for entertainment of all our faculties and all our dispositions : he gives eternal gifts for temporal services, and gives us whatsoever we want for asking, and commands us to ask, and threatens us if we will not ask, and punishes us for refusing to be happy. This is that glorious attribute that hath made order and health, harmony and hope, restitutions and variety, the joys of direct possession, and the joys, the artificial joys of contrariety and comparison. He comforts the poor, and he brings down the rich, that they may be safe, in their hu-

mility and sorrow, from the transportations of an unhappy and uninstructed prosperity. He gives necessities to all, and scatters the extraordinary provisions so, that every nation may traffic in charity, and commute for pleasures. He was the Lord of hosts, and he is still what he was; but he loves to be called the God of Peace, because he was terrible in that, but he is delighted in this. His mercy is his glory, and his glory is the light of heaven. His mercy is the life of the creation, and it fills all the earth; and his mercy is a sea too, and it fills all the abysses of the deep: it hath given us promises for supply of whatsoever we need, and relieves us in all our fears, and in all the evils that we suffer. His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel: for all the world in the abyss of the divine mercies is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is unmeasurable; and the man is not pressed with the burden, nor confounded with numbers: and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend this infinity; but we must admire, and love, and worship, and magnify this mercy for ever and ever; that we may dwell in what we feel, and be comprehended by that which is equal to God, and the parent of all felicity.

II. And yet this is but the one-half. The mercies of giving I have now told of; but those of forgiving are greater, though not more:—"He is ready to forgive."—And upon this stock thrives the interest of our great hope, the hope of a blessed immortality. For if the mercies of giving have not made our expectations big enough to entertain the confidences of heaven; yet when we think of the graciousness and readiness of forgiving, we may with more readiness hope to escape hell, and then we cannot but be blessed by an eternal consequence. We have but small opinion of the divine mercy, if we dare not believe concerning it, that it is desirous, and able, and watchful, and passionate, to keep us, or rescue us respectively from such a condemnation, the pain of which is insupportable, and the duration is eternal, and the extension is misery upon all our faculties, and the intention is great beyond patience, or natural or supernatural abilities, and the state is a state of darkness and despair, of confusion and amazement, of cursing and roaring, anguish of spirit and gnashing of teeth, misery universal, perfect and irremediable. From this it is that God's mercies would so fain preserve us. This is a state that God provides for his enemies, not for them that love him; that endeavour to obey, though they do it but in weakness; that weep truly for their sins, though but with a shower no bigger than the drops of pity; that wait for his coming with a holy and pure flame, though their lamps are no brighter than a poor man's candle, though their strengths are no greater than a contrite reed or a strained arm, and their fires have no more warmth than the smoke of kindling flax. If our faith be pure, and our love unfeigned; if the degrees of it be great, God will accept it into glory; if it be little, he will accept it into grace and make it bigger. For that is the first instance of God's readiness to forgive: he will, upon any terms that are not unreasonable, and that do not suppose a remanent affection to sin, keep us from the intolerable pains of hell. And, indeed, if we consider the constitution of the conditions which God requires, we shall soon perceive God intends heaven to us as a mere gift, and that the duties on our part are but little entertainments and exercises of our

affections and our love, that the devil might not seize upon that portion which, to eternal ages, shall be the instrument of our happiness. For, in all the parts of our duty, it may be, there is but one instance in which we are to do violence to our natural and first desires. For those men have very ill natures, to whom virtue is so contrary that they are inclined naturally to lust, to drunkenness and anger, to pride and covetousness, to unthankfulness and disobedience. Most men that are tempted with lust, could easily enough entertain the sobrieties of other counsels, as of temperance, and justice, or religion, if it would indulge to them but that one passion of lust; and persons that are greedy of money, are not fond of amorous vanities, nor care they to sit long at the wine: and one vice destroys another: and when one vice is consequent to another, it is by way of punishment and dereliction of the man, unless where vices have cognation, and seem but like several degrees of one another. And it is evil custom and super-induced habits that make artificial appetites in most men to most sins: but many times their natural temper vexes them into uneasy dispositions, and aptnesses only to some one unhandsome sort of action. That one thing, therefore, is it, in which God demands of thee mortification and self-denial.

Certain it is, there are very many men in the world, that would fain commute their severity in all other instances for a license in their one appetite; they would not refuse long prayers after a drunken meeting, or great alms together with one great lust. But then consider how easy it is for them to go to heaven. God demands of them, for his sake and their own, to crucify but one natural lust, or one evil habit (for all the rest they are easy enough to do themselves), and God will give them heaven, where the joy is more than one. And I said, it is but one mortification God requires of most men; for, if those persons would extirp but that one thing in which they are principally tempted, it is not easily imaginable that any less evil to which the temptation is trifling, should interpose between them and their great interest. If Saul had not spared Agag, the people could not have expected mercy: and our little and inferior appetites, that rather come to us by intimation and consequent adherences than by direct violence, must not dwell with him, who hath crossed the violence of his distempered nature in a beloved instance. Since, therefore, this is the state of most men, and God in effect demands of them but one thing, and, in exchange for that, will give them all good things; it gives demonstration of his huge easiness to redeem us from that intolerable evil, that is equally consequent to the indulging to one or to twenty sinful habits.

2. Nay, God is so ready in his mercy, that he did [was ready to] pardon* us even before he redeemed us. For, what is the secret of the mystery, that the eternal Son of God should take upon him our nature, and die our death, and suffer for our sins, and do our work, and enable us to do our own? He that did this, is God; he who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God," he came to satisfy himself, to pay to himself the price for his own creatures. And when he did this for us that he might pardon us, was he at that instant angry with us? Was this an effect of his anger or of his love, that God sent his Son to work our pardon and salvation? Indeed, we were angry with God, at enmity with the Prince of Life; but he was reconciled to us so far, as that he then did the greatest

* The author plainly means—"was disposed to pardon."

thing in the world for us ; for nothing could be greater than that God, the Son of God, should die for us. Here was reconciliation before pardon : and God, that came to die for us, did love us first before he came. This was hasty love. But it went farther yet.

3. God pardoned [made provision to pardon] us before we sinned ; and when he foresaw our sin, even mine and yours, he sent his Son to die for us : our pardon was wrought and effected by Christ's death above 1600 years ago ; and for the sins of to-morrow, and the infirmities of the next day, Christ is already dead, already risen from the dead, and does now make intercession and atonement. And this is not only a favour to us who were born in the due time of the gospel, but to all mankind since Adam : for God, who is infinitely patient in his justice, was not at all patient in his mercy ; he forbears to strike and punish us, but he would not forbear to provide a cure for us and remedy. For, as if God could not stay from redeeming us, he promised the Redeemer to Adam in the beginning of the world's sin ; and Christ was " the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world ;" and the covenant of the gospel, though it was not made with man, yet it was from the beginning performed by God as to his part, as to the ministration of pardon ; the seed of the woman was set up against the dragon as soon as ever the tempter had won his first battle : and though God laid his hand, and drew a veil of types and secrecy before the manifestation of his mercies ; yet he did the work of redemption, and saved us by the covenant of faith, and the righteousness of believing, and the mercies of repentance, the graces of pardon, and the blood of the slain Lamb, even from the fall of Adam to this very day, and will do till Christ's second coming.

Adam fell by his folly, and did not perform the covenant of one little work, a work of a single abstinence ; but he was restored by faith in the seed of the woman. And of this righteousness Noah was a preacher : and " by faith Enoch was translated," and by faith a remnant was saved at the flood : and to " Abraham this was imputed for righteousness," and to all the patriarchs, and to all the righteous judges, and holy prophets, and saints of the Old Testament, even while they were obliged (so far as the words of their covenant were expressed) to the law of works : their pardon was sealed and kept within the veil, within the curtains of the sanctuary ; and they saw it not then, but they feel it ever since. And this was a great excellency of the divine mercy unto them. God had mercy on all mankind before Christ's manifestation, even beyond the mercies of their covenant ; and they were saved as we are, by " the seed of the woman," by " God incarnate," by " the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world."

4. God so pardoned us once, that we should need no more pardon : he pardons us " by turning every one of us away from our iniquities." That is the purpose of Christ ; that he might safely pardon us before we sinned, and we might not sin upon the confidence of pardon. He pardoned us not only upon condition we would sin no more, but he took away our sin, cured our cursed inclinations, instructed our understanding, rectified our will, fortified us against temptation ; and now every man whom he pardons, he also sanctifies ; and he is born of God ; and he must not, will not, cannot sin, so long as the seed of God remains with him, so long as his pardon continues. This is the consummation of pardon. For if God had so pardoned us, as only to take away our evils which are past, we should have needed a second Saviour, and a Redeemer for every month, and new par-

dons perpetually. But our blessed Redeemer hath taken away our sin, not only the guilt of our old, but our inclinations to new sins: he makes us like himself, and commands us to live so, that we shall not need a second pardon, that is, a second state of pardon: for we are but once baptized into Christ's death, and that death was but one, and our redemption but one, and our covenant the same; and as long as we continue within the covenant, we are still within the power and comprehensions of the first pardon.

5. And yet there is a necessity of having one degree of pardon more beyond all this. For although we do not abjure our covenant, and renounce Christ, and extinguish the Spirit; yet we resist him, and we grieve him, and we go off from the holiness of the covenant, and return again, and very often step aside, and need this great pardon to be perpetually applied and renewed: and to this purpose, that we may not have a possible need without a certain remedy, the holy "Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" and pardon, sits in heaven in a perpetual advocacy for us, that this pardon, once wrought, may be for ever applied to every emergent need, and every tumour of pride, and every broken heart, and every disturbed conscience, and upon every true and sincere return of a hearty repentance. And now upon this title no more degrees can be added: it is already greater, and was before all our needs, than the old covenant, and beyond the revelations, and did in Adam's youth antedate the gospel, turning the public miseries by secret grace into eternal glories. But now upon other circumstances it is remarkable and excellent, and swells like a hydropic cloud when it is fed with the breath of the morning tide, till it fills the bosom of heaven, and descends in dews and gentle showers, to water and refresh the earth.

6. God is so ready to forgive, that himself works our dispositions towards it. This giving of preventing grace is a mercy of forgiveness contrary to that severity, by which some desperate persons are given over to a reprobate sense; that is, a leaving of men to themselves, so that they cannot pray effectually, nor desire holily, nor repent truly, nor receive any of those mercies which God designed so plenteously, and the Son of God purchased so dearly for us. And this must needs be a great forwardness of forgiveness, when God's mercy gives the pardon, and the way to find it, and the hand to receive it, and the eye to search it, and the heart to desire it; being busy and effective as Elijah's fire, which, intending to convert the sacrifice into its own more spiritual nature of flames and purified substances, stood in the neighbourhood of the fuel, and called forth its enemies, and licked up the hindering moisture and the water of the trenches, and made the altar send forth a fantastic smoke before the sacrifice was enkindled. So is the preventing grace of God: it does all the work of our souls, and makes its own way, and invites itself, and prepares its own lodging, and makes its own entertainment; it gives us precepts, and makes us able to keep them; it enables our faculties, and excites our desires; it provokes us to pray, and sanctifies our heart in prayer, and makes our prayer go forth to act, and the act does make the desire valid, and the desire does make the act certain and persevering: and both of them are the works of God. For more is received into the soul from without the soul, than does proceed from within the soul: it is more for the soul to be moved and disposed, than to work when that is done; as the passage from death to

life is greater than from life to action, especially since the action is owing to that cause that put in the first principle of life.

These are the great degrees of God's forwardness and readiness to forgive, for the expression of which no language is sufficient but God's own words, describing mercy in all those dimensions which can signify to us its greatness and infinity. His mercy "is great," his mercies "are many," his mercy "reacheth unto the heavens," it "fills heaven and earth," it is "above all his works," it "endureth for ever." "God pitieth us as a father doth his children;" nay, he is "our Father," and the same also is "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" so that mercy and we have the same relation: and well it may be so, for we live and die together; for as to man only God shows the mercy of forgiveness, so if God takes away his mercy, man shall be no more; no more capable of felicity, or of any thing that is perfective of his condition or his person. But as God preserves man by his mercy, so his mercy hath all its operations upon man, and returns to its own centre, and incircumscription, and infinity, unless it issues forth upon us. And, therefore, besides the former great lines of the mercy of forgiveness, there is another chain, which but to produce, and tell its links, is to open a cabinet of jewels, where every stone is as bright as a star, and every star is great as the sun, and shines for ever, unless we shut our eyes, or draw the veil of obstinate and final sins.

1. God is long suffering, that is, long before he be angry; and yet God is provoked every day, by the obstinacy of the Jews, and the folly of the heathens, and the rudeness and infidelity of the Mahometans, and the negligence and vices of Christians: and he that can behold no impurity, is received in all places with perfumes of mushrooms, and garments spotted with the flesh, and stained souls, and the actions and issues of misbelief, and an evil conscience, and with accursed sins that he hates, upon pretence of religion which he loves; and he is made a party against himself by our voluntary mistakes; and men continue ten years, and twenty, and thirty, and fifty, in a course of sinning, and they grow old with the vices of their youth; and yet God forbears to kill them, and to consign them over to an eternity of horrid pains, still expecting they should repent and be saved.

2. When God perceives himself forced to strike, yet then he takes off his hand, and repents him of the evil: it is as if it were against him, that any of his creatures should fall under the strokes of an exterminating fury.

3. When he is forced to proceed, he yet makes an end before he hath half done: and is as glad of a pretence to pardon us, or to strike less, as if he himself had the deliverance, and not we. When Ahab had but humbled himself at the word of the Lord, God was glad of it, and went with the message to the prophet himself, saying, "Seest thou not how Ahab humbles himself?" What was the event of it? "I will not bring the evil in his days;" but in his son's days the evil shall come upon his house.

4. God forgets our sin, and puts it out of his remembrance; that is, as though it had never been, he makes penitence to be as pure as innocence to all the effects of pardon and glory: the memory of the sins shall not be upon record, to be used to any after-act of disadvantage, and never shall return, unless we force them out of their secret places by ingratitude and a new state of sinning.

6. God pardons the greatest sinners, and hath left them upon record: and there is no instance in the Scripture of the Divine forgiveness, but in

such instances, the misery of which was a fit instrument to speak aloud the glories of God's mercies, and gentleness, and readiness to forgive. Such were St Paul, a persecutor,—and St Peter, that forswore his Master,—Mary Magdalene, with seven devils,—the thief upon the cross,—Manasses, an idolater,—David, a murderer and adulterer,—the Corinthian, for incest,—the children of Israel, for ten times rebelling against the Lord in the wilderness, with murmuring, and infidelity, and rebellion, and schism, and a golden calf, and open disobedience: and above all, I shall instance in the Pharisees among the Jews, who had sinned against the Holy Ghost, as our blessed Saviour intimates, and tells the particular, viz., in saying, the Spirit of God, by which Christ did work, was an evil spirit; and afterward they crucified Christ; so that two of the persons of the most holy Trinity were openly and solemnly defied, and God had sent out a decree that they should be cut off: yet forty years' time, after all this, was left for their repentance, and they were called upon by arguments more persuasive and more excellent in that forty years, than all the nation had heard from their prophets, even from Samuel to Zacharias. And Jonah thought he had reason on his side to refuse to go to threaten Nineveh; he knew God's tenderness in destroying his creatures, and that he should be thought to be but a false prophet; and so it came to pass according to his belief. “Jonah prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled; for I knew thou wert a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” He told beforehand what the event would be, and he had reason to know it: God proclaimed it in a cloud before the face of all Israel, and made it to be his name: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,” &c.

The result of this consideration is, that as we fear the Divine judgments, so we adore and love his goodness, and let the golden chains of the Divine mercy tie us to a noble prosecution of our duty and the interest of religion. For he is the worst of men whom kindness cannot soften, nor endearment oblige, whom gratitude cannot tie faster than the bands of life and death. He is an ill-natured sinner, if he will not comply with the sweetneses of heaven, and be civil to his angel-guardian, or observant of his patron God, who made him, and feeds him, and keeps all his faculties, and takes care of him, and endures his follies, and waits on him more tenderly than a nurse, more diligently than a client, who hath greater care of him than his father, and whose bowels yearn over him with more compassion than a mother; who is bountiful beyond our need, and merciful beyond our hopes, and makes capacities in us to receive more. Fear is stronger than death, and love is more prevalent than fear, and kindness is the greatest endearment of love; and yet to an ingenuous person, gratitude is greater than all these, and obliges to a solemn duty, when love fails, and fear is dull and inactive, and death itself is despised. But the man who is hardened against kindness, and whose duty is not made alive with gratitude, must be used like a slave, and driven like an ox, and enticed with goads and whips; but must never enter into the inheritance of sons. Let us take heed; for mercy is like a rainbow, which God set in the clouds to remember mankind: it shines here as long as it is not hindered; but we must never look for it after it is night, and it shines not in the other world. If we refuse mercy here, we shall have justice to eternity.

THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING.

A SERMON PREACHED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, SHOWING BY WHAT MEANS THE
SCHOLARS SHALL BECOME MOST LEARNED AND MOST USEFUL.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether
I speak of myself.—*John vii. 17.*

THE ancients, in their mythological learning, tell us, that when Jupiter espied the men of the world striving for Truth, and pulling her in pieces to secure her to themselves, he sent Mercury down amongst them; and he, with his usual arts, dressed Error up in the imagery of Truth, and thrust her into the crowd, and so left them to contend still: and though then, by contention, men were sure to get but little truth, yet they were as earnest as ever, and lost peace too, in their importune contentions for the very image of truth. And this, indeed, is no wonder; but when truth and peace are brought into the world together, and bound up in the same bundle of life; when we are taught a religion by the Prince of Peace, who is the truth itself; to see men contending for this truth, to the breach of that peace; and when men fall out, to see that they should make Christianity their theme, that is one of the greatest wonders in the world. For Christianity is ‘a soft and gentle institution;’ it was brought into the world to soften the asperities of human nature, and to cure the barbarities of evil men, and the contentions of the passionate. The eagle seeing her breast wounded, and espying the arrow that hurt her to be feathered, cried out, ‘The feathered nation is destroyed by their own feathers;’ that is, a Christian fighting and wrangling with a Christian; and indeed, that is very sad: but wrangling about peace too, that peace itself should be the argument of a war that is unnatural; and if it were not that there are many, who are ‘men of much religion and little godliness,’—it would not be that there should be so many quarrels in and concerning that religion, which is wholly made up of truth and peace, and was sent amongst us to reconcile the hearts of men, when they were tempted to uncharitableness by any other unhappy argument. Disputation cures no vice, but kindles a great many, and makes passion evaporate into sin: and though men esteem it learning, yet it is the most useless learning in the world. When Eudamidas the son of Archidamus, heard old Xenocrates disputing about wisdom, he asked very soberly, ‘If the old man be yet disputing and inquiring concerning wisdom, what time will he have to make use of it?’ Christianity is all for practise; and so much time as is spent in quarrels about it, is a diminution to its interest. Men inquire so much what it is, that they have but little time left to be Christians. I remember a saying of Erasmus, ‘that when he first read the New Testament, with fear and a good mind, with a purpose to understand it and obey it, he found it very pleasant; but when, afterwards, he fell on reading the vast differences of commentaries, then he understood it less than he did before, then he began not to understand it:’ for, indeed, the truths of God are best dressed in the plain culture and simplicity of the Spirit; but the truths that men commonly teach, are like the reflection of a multiplying glass; for one piece of good money, you shall have forty that are fantastical; and it is forty to one if your finger hit upon the right.

Man have wearied themselves in the dark, having been amused with false fires ; and instead of going home, have wandered all night ‘ in untrodden, unsafe, uneasy ways ;’ but have not found out what their soul desires. But, therefore, since we are so miserable, and are in error, and have wandered very far, we must do as wandering travellers use to do, go back just to that place from whence they wandered, and begin upon a new account. Let us go to the truth itself, to Christ ; and he will tell us an easy way of ending all our quarrels : for we shall find Christianity to be the easiest and the hardest thing in the world : it is like a secret in arithmetic, infinitely hard till it be found out by a right operation, and then it is so plain, we wonder we did not understand it earlier.

Christ’s way of finding out truth, is by doing the will of God. Every man must, in his station, do that portion of duty, which God requires of him, and then he shall be taught of God all that is fit for him to learn. There is no other way for him but this : “ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that do thereafter.”* And so David of himself, “ I have more understanding than my teachers ; because I keep thy commandments.”† And this is the only way which Christ hath taught us. If you ask, “ What is truth ?” you must not do as Pilate did—ask the question, and then go away from him that only can give you an answer ; for as God is the author of truth, so is he the teacher of it ; and the way to learn it is this of my text : for so saith our blessed Lord, “ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or no.”

My text is simple as truth itself, but greatly comprehensive, and contains a truth that alone will enable you to understand all mysteries, and to expound all prophecies, and to interpret all scriptures, and to search into all secrets ; all, I mean, which concern our happiness and our duty ; and, is plainly to be resolved into this proposition,—‘ The way to judge of religion is by doing of our duty : and theology is rather a Divine life than a Divine knowledge.’ In heaven, indeed, we shall first see, and then love ; but here on earth, we must first love, and love will open our eyes as well as our hearts ; and we shall then see, and perceive, and understand.

In the handling of which proposition, I shall first represent to you, that the certain causes of our errors are nothing but direct sins,—nothing makes us fools and ignorants but living vicious lives ; and then I shall proceed to the direct demonstration of the article in question, that holiness is the only way of truth and understanding.

No man understands the word of God, as it ought to be understood, unless he lays aside all affections to sin : of which because we have taken very little care, the product hath been, that we have had very little wisdom, and very little knowledge, in the ways of God. “ Wickedness,” said Aristotle, “ does corrupt a man’s reasoning ;” it gives him false principles and evil measures of things ; the sweet wine that Ulysses gave to the Cyclops, put his eye out ; and a man that hath contracted evil affections, and made a league with sin, sees only by those measures. A covetous man understands nothing to be good that is not profitable ; and a voluptuous man likes your reasoning well enough, if you discourse of the pleasures of the sense, the ravishments of lust, the noises and inadvertencies, the mirth and

* Ps. cxi. 10.

† Ps. cxix.

songs of merry company ; but if you talk to him of the melancholy lectures of the cross, the content of resignation, the peace of meekness, and the joys of the Holy Ghost, and of rest in God, after your long discourse, and his great silence, he cries out, "What is the matter?" He knows not what you mean. Either you must fit his humour, or change your discourse.

Every man understands by his affections more than by his reason : and when the wolf in the fable went to school to learn to spell, whatever letters were told him, he could never make any thing of them but "lamb;" he thought of nothing but his belly : and if a man be very hungry, you must give him meat, before you give him counsel. A man's mind must be like your proposition, before it can be entertained ; for whatever you put into a man, it will smell of the vessel : it is a man's mind that gives the emphasis, and makes your argument to prevail.

And upon this account it is, that there are so many false doctrines in the only article of repentance. Men know they must repent, but the definition of repentance they take from the convenience of their own affairs : what they will not part with, that is not necessary to be parted with ; and they will repent, but not restore : they will say "they wish they had never done it;" but since it is done, you must give them leave to rejoice in their purchase : they will ask forgiveness of God ; but they sooner forgive themselves, and suppose that God is of their mind : if you tie them to hard terms, your doctrine is not to be understood : or it is but one doctor's opinion,—and, therefore, they will fairly take their leave, and get them another teacher.

What makes these evil, these dangerous and desperate doctrines? Not the obscurity of the thing, but the cloud upon the heart ; for say you what you will, he that hears must be the expounder, and we can never suppose but a man will give sentence in behalf of what he passionately loves. And so it comes to pass, that, as Rabbi Moses observed, God, for the greatest sin, imposed the least oblation, as a she-goat for the sin of idolatry ; for a woman accused of idolatry, a barley-cake : so do most men ; they think to expiate the worst of their sins with a trifling, with a pretended, little, insignificant repentance. God, indeed, did so, that the cheapness of the oblation might teach them to hope for pardon, not from the ceremony, but from a severe internal repentance : but men take any argument to lessen their repentance, that they may not lessen their pleasures or their estates, —and that repentance may be nothing but a word,—and mortification signify nothing against their pleasures ; but be a term of art only, fitted for the schools or for the pulpit,—but nothing relative to practice, or the extermination of their sin. So that it is no wonder we understand so little of religion : it is because we are in love with that which destroys it ; and as a man does not care to hear what does not please him, so neither does he believe it ; he cannot, he will not understand it.

2. He that means to understand the will of God and the truth of religion, must lay aside all inordinate affections to the world.—St Paul complained that there was at "that day a veil upon the hearts of the Jews, in the reading of the Old Testament;" they looked for a temporal prince to be their Messias, and their affections and hopes dwelt in secular advantages ; and so long as that veil was there, they could not see, and they would not accept the poor despised Jesus.

For the things of the world, besides that they entangle one another, and

make much business, and spend much time, they also take up the attentions of a man's mind, and spend his faculties, and make them trifling and secular with the very handling and conversation. And, therefore, the Pythagoreans taught their disciples "a separation from the things of the body, if they would purely find out truth and the excellencies of wisdom." Had not he lost his labour, that would have discoursed wisely to Apicius, and told him of the books of fate and the secrets of the other world, the abstractions of the soul, and its brisker immortality, that saints and angels eat not, and that the spirit of a man lives for ever upon wisdom, and holiness, and contemplation? The fat glutton would have stared awhile upon the preacher, and then have fallen asleep. But if you had discoursed well and knowingly of a lamprey, a large mullet, or a boar, and have sent him a cook from Asia to make new sauces, he would have attended carefully, and taken in your discourses greedily. And so it is in the questions and secrets of Christianity: which made St Paul, when he intended to convert Felix, discourse first with him about "temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come." He began in the right point; he knew it was to no purpose to preach Jesus Christ crucified to an intemperate person, to an usurper of other men's rights, to one whose soul dwelt in the world, and cared not for the sentence of the last day. The philosophers began their wisdom with the meditation of death, and St Paul his with the discourse of the day of judgment: to take the heart off from this world and the amiabilities of it, which dishonour and baffle the understanding, and made Solomon himself become a child, and fooled into idolatry, by the prettiness of a talking woman. Men, now-a-days, love not a religion that will cost them dear. If your doctrine calls upon men to part with any considerable part of their estates, you must pardon them if they cannot believe you; they understand it not. I shall give you one great instance of it.

When we consider the infinite unreasonableness that is in the popish religion, how against common sense their doctrine of transubstantiation is, how against the common experience of human nature is the doctrine of the pope's infallibility, how against Scripture is the doctrine of indulgencies and purgatory; we may well think it a wonder, that no more men are persuaded to leave such unlearned follies. But then, on the other side, the wonder will cease, if we mark how many temporal ends are served by these doctrines. If you destroy the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences; you take away the priest's income, and make the see apostolic to be poor; if you deny the pope's infallibility, you will despise his authority, and examine his propositions, and discover his failing, and put him to answer hard arguments, and lessen his power: and, indeed, when we run through all the propositions of difference between them and us, and see that, in every one of them, they serve an end of money or of power; it will be very visible that the way to confute them is not by learned disputations,—for we see they have been too long without effect, and without prosperity: the men must be cured of their affections to the world, "that with naked and divested affections they might follow the naked crucified Jesus;" and then they would soon learn the truths of God, which, till then, will be impossible to be apprehended. And how many men are there amongst us, who are, therefore, enemies to the true religion, because it seems to be against their profit? The argument of Demetrius is unanswerable: "By this craft they get their livings:" leave them in their livings, and they will let your reli-

gion alone ; if not, they think they have reason to speak against it. When men's souls are possessed with the world, their souls cannot be invested with holy truths. Now, because a man cannot serve two masters ; because he cannot vigorously attend two objects : because there can be but one soul in any living creature ; if the world have got possession, talk no more of your questions, shut your Bibles, and read no more of the words of God to them, for they cannot tell of " the doctrine, whether it be of God, or of the world." That is the second particular : worldly affections hinder true understandings in religion.

3. No man, how learned soever, can understand the word of God, or be at peace in the questions of religion, unless he be a master over his passions. Passionate men are to be taught the first elements of religion ; and let men pretend to as much learning as they please, they must begin again at Christ's cross ; they must learn true mortification and crucifixion of their anger and desires, before they can be good scholars in Christ's school,—or be admitted into the more secret inquiries of religion,—or profit in spiritual understanding. It was an excellent proverb of the Jews, " The Holy Ghost never dwells in the house of passion." Truth enters into the heart of man, when it is empty, and clean, and still ; but when the mind is shaken with passion as with a storm, you can never hear the " voice of the charmer, though he charm very wisely : " and you will very hardly sheathe a sword, when it is held by a loose and a paralytic arm. Whoever means to learn the secrets of God's wisdom, " his soul must be consubstantiated with reason," not invested with passion : to him that is otherwise, things are but in the dark, his notion is obscure, and his sight troubled ; and, therefore, though we often meet with passionate fools, yet we seldom or never hear of a very passionate wise man.

I have now done with the first part of my undertaking, and proved to you that our evil life is the cause of our controversies and ignorances in religion and of the things of God. You see what hinders us from becoming good divines. But all this while, we are but in the preparation to the mysteries of godliness : when we have thrown off all affections to sin, when we have stripped ourselves from all fond adherences to the things of the world, and have broken the chains and dominion of our passions ; then we may say with David, " My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready : " then we may say, " Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth : " but we are not yet instructed. It remains, therefore, that we inquire what is that immediate principle or means, by which we shall certainly and infallibly be let into all truth, and be taught the mind of God, and understand all his secrets ; and this is worth our knowledge. I cannot say that this will end your labours, and put a period to your studies, and make your learning easy ; it may possibly increase your labour, but it will make it profitable ; it will not end your studies, but it will direct them ; it will not make human learning easy, but it will make it " wise unto salvation," and conduct it into true notices and ways of wisdom.

I am now to describe to you the right way of knowledge. " Do God's will," saith Christ, " and ye shall understand God's word." And it was an excellent saying of St Peter, " Add to your faith virtue,"* &c. " If these things be in you and abound, ye shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of

our Lord Jesus Christ." For in this case, it is not enough that all our hinderances of knowledge are removed; for that is but the opening of the covering of the book of God; but when it is opened, it is written with a hand that every eye cannot read. Though the windows of the east be open, yet every eye cannot behold the glories of the sun: the eye must be fitted to the splendour; and it is not the wit of the man, but the spirit of the man, not so much his head as his heart, that learns the divine philosophy.

1. Now, in this inquiry, I must take one thing for granted, that every good man is "taught of God:" and, indeed, unless he teach us, we shall make but ill scholars ourselves, and worse guides to others. If God teaches us, then all is well; but if we do not learn wisdom at his feet, from whence should we have it? it can come from no other spring. And, therefore, it naturally follows, that by how much nearer we are to God, by so much better we are like to be instructed.

But this being supposed, as being most evident, we can easily proceed, by wonderful degrees and steps of progression, in the economy of this divine philosophy: For,

2. There is, in every righteous man, a new vital principle; the Spirit of grace is the Spirit of wisdom, and teaches us by secret inspirations, by proper arguments, by actual persuasions, by personal applications, by effects and energies: and as the soul of a man is the cause of all his vital operations, so is the Spirit of God the life of that life, and the cause of all actions and productions spiritual: and the consequence of this is what St John tells us of, "Ye have received the unction from above, and that anointing teacheth you all things:"* *All things* of some one kind; that is, certainly, all things that pertain to life and godliness; all that by which a man is wise and happy. We see this by common experience. Unless the soul have a new life put into it, unless there be a vital principle within, unless the Spirit of life be the informer of the spirit of man,—the word of God will be as dead in the operation, as the body in its powers and possibilities. "A man alone," saith our philosophy, "does not beget a man, but a man and the sun;" for without the influence of the celestial bodies, all natural actions are ineffective: and so it is in the operations of the soul.

Which principle, divers fanatics, both among us and in the church of Rome, misunderstanding, look for new revelations, and expect to be conducted by ecstasy, and will not pray but in a transfiguration, and live upon raptures and extravagant expectations, and separate themselves from the conversation of men, by affectations, by new measures and singularities, and destroy order, and despise government, and live upon illiterate phantasms and ignorant discourses. These men "believe the Holy Ghost:" for the Spirit of God makes men wise: it is an evil spirit that makes them fools. The Spirit of God makes us "wise unto salvation;" it does not spend its holy influences in disguises and convulsions of the understanding: God's Spirit does not destroy reason, but heightens it; he never disorders the beauties of government, but is a God of order; it is the Spirit of humility, and teaches no pride; he goes in company with his own ordinances, and makes progressions by the measures of life: his infusions are just as our acquisitions, and his graces pursue the methods of nature: that which was imperfect, he leads on to perfection; and that which was weak, he makes

* 1 John ii. 27.

strong: he opens the heart, not to receive murmurs, or to attend to secret whispers, but to hear the word of God; and then he opens the heart, and creates a new one; and without this new creation, this new principle of life, we may hear the word of God, but we can never understand it; we hear the sound, but are never the better; unless there be in our hearts a secret conviction by the Spirit of God, the Gospel itself is a dead letter, and worketh not in us the light and righteousness of God.

Do not we see this by daily experience? Even those things which a good man and an evil man know, they do not know them both alike. A wicked man does know that good is lovely, and sin is of an evil and destructive nature; and when he is reprov'd, he is convinc'd; and when he is observ'd, he is ashamed; and when he has done, he is unsatisfis'd; and when he pursues his sin, he does it in the dark: tell him he shall die, and he sighs deeply, but he knows it as well as you: proceed, and say, that after death, comes judgment, and the poor man believes and trembles; he knows that God is angry with him; and if you tell him, that for aught he knows, he may be in hell to-morrow, he knows that it is an intolerable truth, but it is also undeniable: and yet, after all this, he runs to commit his sin with as certain an event and resolution as if he knew no argument against it: these notices of things terrible and true pass through his understanding, as an eagle through the air; as long as her flight lasted, the air was shaken, but there remains no path behind her.

Now since, at the same time, we see other persons, not so learned, it may be, not so much vers'd in Scriptures,—yet they say a thing is good and lay hold of it; they believe glorious things of heaven, and they live accordingly, as men that believe themselves; half a word is enough to make them understand; a nod is a sufficient reproof; the crowing of a cock, the singing of a lark, the dawning of the day, and the washing their hands, are to them competent memorials of religion, and warnings of their duty. What is the reason of this difference? They both read the Scriptures, they read and hear the same sermons, they have capable understandings, they both believe what they hear and what they read, and yet the event is vastly different. The reason is that which I am now speaking of; the one understands by one principle; the other by another; the one understands by nature, and the other by grace; the one by human learning, and the other by Divine; the one reads the Scriptures without, and the other within; the one understands as a son of man, the other as a son of God; the one perceives by the proportions of the world, and the other by the measures of the Spirit; the one understands by reason, and the other by love; and, therefore, he does not only understand the sermons of the Spirit, and perceives their meaning, but he pierces deeper, and knows the meaning of that meaning; that is, the secret of the Spirit, that which is spiritually discern'd, that which gives life to the proposition, and activity to the soul. And the reason is, because he hath a divine principle within him, and a new understanding; that is plainly, he hath love, and that is more than knowledge; as was rarely well observ'd by St Paul, “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth;” that is, charity makes the best scholars. No sermons can edify you, no Scriptures can build you up a holy building to God, unless the love of God be in your hearts, and “purify your souls from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”

“The natural man,” saith the apostle Paul, “cannot perceive the things

of the Spirit ; they are foolishness unto him ; for they are spiritually discerned :” for he that discourses of things by the measures of sense, thinks nothing good but that which is delicious to the palate, or pleases the brutish part of man ; and therefore, while he estimates the secrets of religion by such measures, they must needs seem as insipid as cork, or the uncondited mushroom ; for they have nothing at all of that in their constitution. A voluptuous person is like the dogs of Sicily, so filled with the deliciousness of plants that grow in every furrow and hedge, that they can never keep the scent of their game. “The fire and water,” said St Chrysostom, “can never mingle ; so neither can sensuality, and the watchfulness and wise discerning of the spirit.”—“When the wicked governor asked of Christ concerning truth, Christ gave him no answer.” He was not fit to hear it.

He, therefore, who so understands the words of God, that he not only believes, but loves the proposition ; he who consents with all his heart, and, being convinced of the truth, does also apprehend the necessity, and obeys the precept, and delights in the discovery, and lays his hand upon his heart, and reduces the notices of things to the practice of duty ; he who dares trust his proposition, and drives it on to the utmost issue, resolving to go after it whithersoever it can invite him ; this man walks in the Spirit ; at least thus far he is gone towards it ; his understanding is brought “into the obedience of Christ.” This is a “loving God with all our mind ;” and whatever goes less than this, is but memory, and not understanding ; or else such notice of things, by which a man is neither the wiser nor the better.

3. Sometimes God gives to his choicest, his most elect and precious servants, a knowledge even of secret things, which he communicates not to others. We find it greatly remarked in the case of Abraham, “And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing that I do ?” * Why not from Abraham ?—God tells us : “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” † And though this be irregular and infrequent, yet it is a reward of their piety, and the proper increase also of the spiritual man. We find this spoken by God to Daniel, and promised to be the lot of the righteous man in the days of the Messiah : ‡ “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly :”—and what then ?—“None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” § Where, besides that the wise man and the wicked are opposed, plainly signifying that the wicked man is a fool and an ignorant ; it is plainly said, that “None of the wicked shall understand” the wisdom and mysteriousness of the kingdom of the Messias.

4. A good life is the best way to understand wisdom and religion, because, by the experiences and relishes of religion, there is conveyed to them such a sweetness, to which all wicked men are strangers : there is in the things of God, to them which practise them, a deliciousness that makes us love them, and that love admits us into God’s cabinet, and strangely clarifies the understanding by the purification of the heart. For when our reason is raised up by the Spirit of Christ, it is turned quickly into experience ; when our faith relies upon the principles of Christ, it is changed into vision ; and so long as we know God only in the ways of man, by con-

* Gen. xlvii. 17.

† Ver. 19.

‡ Dan. xii. 10.

§ Dan. xli. 10.

tentious learning, by arguing and dispute,—we see nothing but the shadow of him ; and in that shadow we meet with many dark appearances, little certainty, and much conjecture : but when we know him with the eyes of holiness, and the intuition of gracious experiences, with a quiet spirit and the peace of enjoyment ; then we shall hear what we never heard, and see what our eyes never saw ; then the mysteries of godliness shall be opened unto us, and clear as the windows of the morning : and this is rarely well expressed by the Apostle, “ If we stand up from the dead, and awake from sleep, then Christ shall give us light.”*

For although the Scriptures themselves are written by the Spirit of God, yet they are written within and without ; and besides the light that shines upon the face of them, unless there be a light shining within our hearts, unfolding the leaves, and interpreting the mysterious sense of the Spirit, convincing our consciences and preaching to our hearts, to look for Christ in the leaves of the Gospel, is to ‘ look for the living amongst the dead.’ There is a life in them, but that life is, according to St Paul’s expression, “ hid with Christ in God :” and, unless the Spirit of God be the discloser we shall never draw it forth.

Human learning brings excellent ministries towards this ; it is admirably useful for the reproof of heresies, for the detection of fallacies, for the letter of the Scripture, for collateral testimonies, for exterior advantages ; but there is something beyond this, that human learning, without the addition of Divine, can never reach. Moses was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians ; and the holy men of God contemplated the glories of God in the admirable order, motion, and influences of the heavens ; but besides all this, they were taught of God something far beyond these prettinesses. Pythagoras read Moses’s books, and so did Plato ; and yet they became not proselytes of the religion, though they were learned scholars of such a master. The reason is, because that which they drew forth from thence, was not the life and secret of it.

There is a secret in these books, which few men, none but the godly, did understand ; and though much of this secret is made manifest in the Gospel, yet even here, also, there is a letter, and there is a spirit ; still there is a reserve for God’s secret ones, even all those deep mysteries which the Old Testament covered in figures, and stories, and names, and prophecies, and which Christ hath, and by his Spirit, will yet reveal more plainly to all that will understand them by their proper measures. For, although the Gospel is infinitely more legible and plain than the obscurer leaves of the law, yet there is a seal upon them also ; “ which seal no man shall open, but he that is worthy.” We may understand something of it by the three children of the captivity ; they were all skilled in all the wisdom of the Chaldees, and so was Daniel : but there was something beyond that in him ; “ the wisdom of the most high God was in him ;” and that taught him a learning beyond his learning.

In all Scripture there is a spiritual sense, which, as it tends directly to holiness, so it is best and truest understood by the sons of the Spirit, who love God, and therefore know him. “ Every thing is best known by its own similitude and analogies.”

But I must take some other time to speak fully of those things : I have

* Eph. v. 14.

but one thing more to say, and then I shall make my applications of this doctrine, and so conclude.

5. Lastly : there is a sort of God's dear servants who walk in perfectness, who 'perfect holiness in the fear of God ;' and they have a degree of charity and Divine knowledge more than we can discourse of, and more certain than the demonstrations of geometry, brighter than the sun, and indeficient as the light of heaven. This is called by the apostle the 'brightness of God,' manifested in the hearts of his dearest servants. But I shall say no more of this at this time, for this is to be felt, and not to be talked of ; and they that never touched it with their finger, may secretly, perhaps laugh at it in their own heart, and be never the wiser. All that I shall now say of it is, that a good man is united unto God, as a flame touches a flame, and combines into splendour and to glory : so is the spirit of a man united unto Christ by the Spirit of God. These are the friends of God, and they best know God's mind, and they only that are so, know how much such men do know. They have a special unction from above : so that now you are come to the top of all ; this is the highest round of the ladder, and the angels stand upon it : they dwell in love and contemplation, they worship and obey, but dispute not : and our quarrels and impertinent wranglings about religion are nothing else but the want of the measures of this estate. Our light is like a candle ; every wind of vain doctrine blows it out, or spends the wax, and makes the light tremulous ; but the lights of heaven are fixed and bright and shine for ever.

But that we may speak not only things mysterious, but things intelligible ; how does it come to pass, by what means and by what economy is it effected, that a holy life is the best determination of all questions, and the surest way of knowledge ? Is it to be supposed, that a godly man is better enabled to determine the questions of purgatory or transubstantiation ? is the gift of chastity the best way to reconcile Thomas and Scotus ? and is a temperate man always a better scholar than a drunkard ? To this I answer, that in all things in which true wisdom consists, holiness, which is the best wisdom, is the surest way of understanding them. And this.

1. Is effected by holiness as a proper and natural instrument : for naturally every thing is best discerned by its proper light and congenial instrument. For as the eye sees visible objects, and the understanding perceives the intellectual ; so does the Spirit the things of the spirit. "The natural man," saith St Paul, "knows not the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned : " that is, they are discovered by a proper light, and concerning these things an unsanctified man discourses pitifully, with an imperfect idea, as a blind man does of light and colours, which he never saw.

A good man, though unlearned in secular notices, is like the windows of the temple, narrow without and broad within : he sees not so much of what profits not abroad, but whatsoever is within, and concerns religion and the glorifications of God, that he sees with a broad inspection : but all human learning, without God, is but blindness and ignorant folly.

But when it is 'righteousness dipped in the wells of truth ;' it is like an eye of gold in a rich garment, or like the light of heaven, it shows itself by its own splendour. What learning is it to discourse of the philosophy of the sacrament, if you do not feel the virtue of it ? and the man that can with eloquence and subtilty discourse of the instrumental efficacy of baptismal waters, talks ignorantly in respect of him who hath 'the answer of a

good conscience within, and is cleansed by the purifications of the Spirit. If the question concern any thing that can perfect man and make him happy, all that is the proper knowledge and notice of the good man. How can a wicked man understand the purities of the heart? and how can an evil and unworthy communicant tell what it is to have received Christ by faith, to dwell with him, to be united to him, to receive him in his heart? The good man only understands that : the one sees the colour, and the other feels the substance ; the one discourses of the sacrament, and the other receives Christ ; the one discourses for or against transubstantiation, but the good man feels himself to be changed, and so joined to Christ, that he only understands the true sense of transubstantiation, while he becomes to Christ bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, and of the same spirit with his Lord.

We talk much of reformation, but who can tell better what is, and what is not true reformation, than he that is truly reformed himself? He knows what pleases God, and can best tell by what instruments he is reconciled. "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom ; and the lips of the righteous know what is acceptable," saith Solomon. He cannot be cozened by names of things, and feels that reformation to be imposture that is sacrilegious : himself is humble and obedient, and therefore knows that is not truth that persuades to schism and disobedience : and most of the questions of Christendom are such which are either good for nothing, and therefore to be laid aside ; or if they be complicated with action, and are ministries of practice, no man can judge them so well as the spiritual man. That which best pleases God, that which does good to our neighbour, that which teaches sobriety, that which combines with government, that which speaks honour of God, and does him honour,—that only is truth. Holiness, therefore, is a proper and natural instrument of Divine knowledge, and must needs be the best way of instruction in the questions of Christendom, because, in the most of them, a duty is complicated with the proposition.

2. Holiness is not only an advantage to the learning all wisdom and holiness, but for the discerning that which is wise and holy from what is trifling, and useless, and contentious ; and to one of these heads all questions will return : and therefore, in all, from holiness we have the best instructions. And this brings me to the next particle of the general consideration. For that which we are taught by the holy Spirit of God, this new nature, this vital principle within us, it is that which is worth our learning ; not vain and empty, idle and insignificant notions, in which when you have laboured till your eyes are fixed in their orbs, and your flesh unfixed from its bones, you are no better and no wiser. If the Spirit of God be your teacher, he will teach you such truths as will make you know and love God, and become like to him, and enjoy him for ever, by passing from similitude to union and eternal fruition. But what are you the better, if any man should pretend to teach you whether every angel makes a species ; and what is the individuation of the soul in the state of separation ; what are you the wiser, if you should study and find out what place Adam should forever have lived in, if he had not fallen ; and what is any man the more learned, if he hears the disputes, whether Adam should have multiplied children in the state of innocence, and what would have been the event of things, if one child had been born before his father's sin ?

Too many scholars have lived upon air and empty notions for many ages past, and troubled themselves with tying and untying knots, like hypochon-

driachs in a fit of melancholy, thinking of nothing, and troubling themselves with nothing; and falling out about nothings, and being very wise and very learned in things that are not and work not, and were never planted in paradise by the finger of God. Men's notions are too often like the mules, begotten by equivocal and unnatural generations; but they make no species: they are begotten, but they can beget nothing; they are the effects of long study, but they can do no good when they are produced: they are not that which Solomon calls 'the way of understanding.' If the Spirit of God be our teacher, we shall learn to avoid evil, and to do good; to be wise and to be holy; to be profitable and careful: and they that walk in this way, shall find more peace in their consciences, more skill in the scriptures, more satisfaction in their doubts, than can be obtained by all the polemical and impertinent disputations of the world. And if the Holy Spirit can teach us how vain a thing it is to do foolish things, he also will teach us how vain a thing it is to trouble the world with foolish questions, to disturb the church for interest or pride, to spend the people's zeal in things unprofitable, to make religion to consist in outsides, and opposition to circumstances, and trifling regards. No, no; the man that is wise, he that is conducted by the Spirit of God,—knows better in what Christ's kingdom does consist, than to throw away his time and interest, and peace and safety—for what? for religion? no: for the body of religion? not so much: for the garment of the body of religion? no, not for so much; but for the fringes of the garment of the body of religion; things, or rather circumstances and manners of things, in which the soul and spirit is not at all concerned.

3. Holiness of life is the best way of finding out truth and understanding; not only as a natural medium, nor only as a prudent medium, but as a means by way of Divine blessing. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."* Here we have a promise for it; and upon that we may rely.

The old man that confuted the Arian priest by a plain recital of his creed, found a mighty power of God effecting his own work by a strange manner, and by a very plain instrument: it wrought a Divine blessing just as sacraments use to do: and this lightening sometimes comes in a strange manner, as a peculiar blessing to good men. For God kept the secrets of his kingdom from the wise heathens and the learned Jews, revealing them to babes; not because they had less learning, but because they had more love; they were children and babes in malice; they loved Christ, and so he became to them a light and a glory. St. Paul had more learning than they all; and Moses was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians: yet because he was the meekest man upon earth, he was also the wisest; and to his human learning, in which he was excellent, he had a Divine light and excellent wisdom superadded to him, by way of spiritual blessings. And St. Paul, though he went very far to the knowledge of many great and excellent truths by the force of human learning, yet he was far short of perfective truth, and true wisdom, till he learned a new lesson in a new school, at the feet of one greater than his Gamaliel: his learning grew much greater, his notions brighter, his skill deeper,—by the love of Christ, and his desires, his passionate desires after Jesus.

* John xiv. 24.

The force and use of human learning, and of this Divine learning I am now speaking of, are both well expressed by the prophet Isaiah; “And the vision of all is come unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.”* He that is no learned man, who is not bred up in the schools of the prophets, cannot read God’s book for want of learning. For human learning is the gate and first entrance of Divine vision; not the only one indeed, but the common gate. But beyond this there must be another learning; for he that is learned, bring the book to him, and you are not much the better, as to the secret part of it, if the book be sealed, if his eyes be closed, if his heart be not opened, if God does not speak to him in the secret way of discipline. Human learning is an excellent foundation: but the top-stone is laid by love and conformity to the will of God. For we may further observe, that blindness, error and ignorance, are the punishments which God sends upon wicked and ungodly men. Hear St Austin’s expression: “The truth hath not yet been manifested fully to us, by reason of our demerits:” our sins have hindered the brightness of the truth from shining upon us. And St Paul observes, that when the heathens gave themselves “over to lusts, God gave them over to strong delusions, and to believe a lie.”† But “God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom and knowledge, and joy,” said the wise Preacher.‡ But this is most expressly promised in the New Testament, and particularly in that admirable sermon, which our blessed Saviour preached a little before his death: “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.”§ Well, there is our teacher told of plainly: but how shall we obtain this teacher, and how shall we be taught? Christ will pray for us that we may have this Spirit. That is well: but shall all Christians have the Spirit? Yes, all that will live like Christians: for so said Christ, “If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.” Mark these things. The Spirit of God is our teacher:—he will abide with us for ever, to be our teacher:—he will teach us all things;—but how? “If ye love Christ,” if ye keep his commandments, but not else: if ye be of the world, that is, of worldly affections, ye cannot see him, ye cannot know him. And this is the particular I am now to speak to; the way by which the Spirit of God teaches us in all the ways and secrets of God, is love and holiness.

4. When this is reduced to practice and experience, we find not only in things of practice, but even in deepest mysteries, not only the choicest and most eminent saints, but even every good man can best tell what is true, and best reprove an error.

He that goes about to speak of and to understand the mysterious Trinity, and does it by words and names of man’s invention, or by such which signify contingently, if he reckons this mystery by the mythology of numbers, by the cabala of letters, by the distinctions of the school, and by the weak inventions of disputing people; if he only talks of essences and existences,

* Isa. xxix. 11, 12.

† Rom. i. 25, 26.

‡ Eccl. ii. 26.

§ John, xiv. 26.

hypostasies and personalities, distinctions without difference, and priority in coequalities, and unity in pluralities, and of superior predicates of no larger extent than the inferior subjects ;—he may amuse himself, and find his understanding will be like St Peter's upon the mount of Tabor at the transfiguration : he may build three tabernacles in his head, and talk something, but he knows not what. But the good man that feels the “power of the Father,” and he to whom “the Son” is become “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ;” he in “whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is spread ;” to whom God hath communicated the “Holy Ghost, the Comforter ;”—this man, though he understands nothing of that which is unintelligible, yet he only understands the mysteriousness of the holy Trinity. No man can be convinced well and wisely of the article of the holy, blessed, and undivided Trinity, but he that feels the mightiness of “the Father begetting him to a new life,” the wisdom of “the Son building him up in a most holy faith,” and the “love of the Spirit of God making him to become like unto God.”

He that hath passed from his childhood in grace, under the generation of the Father, and is gone forward to be a young man in Christ, strong and vigorous in holy actions and holy undertakings, and from thence is become an old disciple, and strong and grown old in religion, and the conversation of the Spirit ; this man best understands the secret and undiscernible economy, he feels this unintelligible mystery, and sees with his heart what his tongue can never express, and his metaphysics can never prove. In these cases faith and love are the best knowledge, and Jesus Christ is best known by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and if the kingdom of God be in us, then we know God, and are known of him ; and when we communicate of the Spirit of God, when we pray for him, and have received him, and entertained him, and dwelt with him, and warmed ourselves by his holy fires,—then we know him too : but there is no other satisfactory knowledge of the blessed Trinity but this : and, therefore, whatever thing is spoken of God metaphysically, there is no knowing of God theologically, and as he ought to be known, but by the measures of holiness, and the proper light of the Spirit of God.

But in this case experience is the best learning, and Christianity is the best institution, and the Spirit of God is the best teacher, and holiness is the greatest wisdom ; and he that sins most, is the most ignorant,—and the humble and obedient man is the best scholar : “For the Spirit of God is a loving Spirit, and will not enter into a polluted soul : but he that keepeth the law, getteth the understanding thereof ; and the perfection of the fear of the Lord is wisdom,” said the wise Ben-Sirach.* And now give me leave to apply the doctrine to you, and so I shall dismiss you from this attention.

You, fathers and brethren, you who are, or intend to be of the clergy ; you see here the best compendium of your studies, the best abbreviature of your labours, the truest method of wisdom, and the infallible, the only way of judging concerning the disputes and questions in Christendom. It is not by reading multitudes of books, but by studying the truth of God : it is not by laborious commentaries of the doctors that you can finish your work, but by the expositions of the Spirit of God : it is not by the rules of meta-

* Eccclus. xxi. 11.

physics, but by the proportions of holiness : and when all books are read, and all arguments examined, and all authorities alleged, nothing can be found to be true that is unholy. "Give yourselves to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine," saith St Paul. Read all good books you can ; but exhortation unto good life is the best instrument, and the best teacher of true doctrine, of that which is 'according to godliness.'

And let me tell you this, the great learning of the fathers was more owing to their piety than to their skill ; more to God than to themselves : and to this purpose is that excellent ejaculation of St Chrysostom, with which I will conclude : "O blessed and happy men, whose names are in the book of life, from whom the devils fled, and heretics did fear them, who (by holiness) have stopped the mouths of them that spake perverse things ! But I, like David, will cry out, 'Where are thy loving-kindnesses which have been ever of old ?' Where is the blessed quire of bishops and doctors, who shined like lights in the world, and contained the word of life ? 'their very memory is pleasant.' Where is that Evodias, the sweet savour of the church, the successor and imitator of the holy apostles ? Where is Ignatius, in whom God dwelt ? Where is St Dionysius the Areopagite, that bird of Paradise, that celestial eagle ? Where is Hippolytus, 'that gentle sweet person ?' Where is great St Basil, a man almost equal to the apostles ? Where is Athanasius, rich in virtue ? Where is Gregory Nyssen, that great divine ? And Ephrem the great Syrian, that stirred up the sluggish, and awakened the sleepers, and comforted the afflicted, and brought the young men to discipline ; the looking-glass of the religious, the captain of the penitents, the destruction of heresies, the receptacle of graces, the habitation of the Holy Ghost ?" These were the men that prevailed against error, because they lived according to truth : and whoever shall oppose you, and the truth you walk by, may better be confuted by your lives than by your disputations. Let your adversaries have no evil thing to say of you, and then you will best silence them : for all heresies and false doctrines are but like Myron's counterfeit cow, it deceived none but beasts ; and these can cozen none but the wicked and the negligent, them that love a lie, and live according to it. But if ye become burning and shining lights ; if ye do not detain the truth in unrighteousness ; if ye walk in light, and live in the Spirit ; your doctrines will be true, and that truth will prevail. But if ye live wickedly and scandalously, every little schismatic shall put you to shame, and draw disciples after him, and abuse your flocks, and feed them with colocynths and hemlock, and place heresy in the chairs appointed for your religion.

I pray God give you all grace to follow this wisdom, to study this learning, to labour for the understanding of godliness ; so your time and your studies, your persons and your labours, will be holy and useful, sanctified and blessed, beneficial to men and pleasing to God, through him who is the wisdom of the Father, who is made to all that love him wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption : "To whom with the Father," &c.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming—1 Cor. xv. 23.

THE condition of man, in this world, is so limited and depressed, so relative and imperfect, that the best things he does, he does weakly,—and the best things he hath, are imperfections in their very constitution. I need not tell how little it is that we know: the greatest indication of this is, that we can never tell how many things we know not; and we may soon span our own knowledge, but our ignorance we can never fathom. Our very will, in which mankind pretends to be most noble and imperial, is a direct state of imperfection; and our very liberty of choosing good and evil is permitted to us, not to make us proud, but to make us humble; for it supposes weakness of reason and weakness of love. For if we understood all the degrees of amability in the service of God, or if we had such love to God as he deserves, and so perfect a conviction as were fit for his services, we could no more deliberate: for liberty of will is like the motion of a magnetic needle toward the north, full of trembling and uncertainty till it were fixed in the beloved point; it wavers as long as it is free, and is at rest, when it can choose no more. And truly what is the hope of man? It is indeed the resurrection of the soul in this world from sorrow and her saddest pressures, and like the twilight to the day, and the harbinger of joy; but still it is but a conjugation of infirmities, and proclaims our present calamity, only because it is uneasy here, it thrusts us forward toward the light and glories of the resurrection. For as a worm creeping with her belly on the ground, with her portion and share of Adam's curse, lifts up its head to partake a little of the blessings of the air, and opens the junctures of her imperfect body, and curls her little rings into knots and combinations, drawing up her tail to a neighbourhood of the head's pleasure and motion; but still it must return to abide the fate of its own nature, and dwell and sleep upon the dust: so are the hopes of a mortal man; he opens his eyes, and looks upon fine things at distance, and shuts them again with weakness, because they are too glorious to behold; and the man rejoices because he hopes fine things are staying for him; but his heart aches, because he knows there are a thousand ways to fail and miss of those glories; and though he hopes, yet he enjoys not; he longs, but he possesses not, and must be content with his portion of dust; and being 'a worm, and no man,' must lie down in this portion, before he can receive the end of his hopes, the salvation of his soul in the resurrection of the dead. For as death is the end of our lives, so is the resurrection the end of our hopes; and as we die daily, so we daily hope: but death, which is the end of our life, is the enlargement of our spirits from hope to certainty, from uncertain fears to certain expectations, from the death of the body to the life of the soul; that is, to partake of the light and life of Christ, to rise to life as he did; for his resurrection is the beginning of ours; he died for us alone, not for himself; but he rose again for himself and us too. So that if he did rise, so shall we; the resurrection shall be universal; good and bad, all shall rise, but not altogether: first

Christ, then we that are Christ's; and yet there is a third resurrection, though not spoken of here; but thus it shall be: "The dead in Christ shall rise first;" that is, next to Christ; and after them, the wicked shall rise to condemnation.

So that you see here is the sum of affairs treated of in my text: not whether it be lawful to eat a tortoise or a mushroom, or to tread with the foot bare upon the ground within the octaves of Easter. It is not here inquired, whether angels be material or immaterial; or whether the dwellings of dead infants be within the air or in the regions of the earth? the inquiry here is, whether we are to be Christians or no? whether we are to live good lives or no? or whether it be permitted to us to live with lust or covetousness, acted with all the daughters of rapine and ambition? whether there be any such thing as sin, any judicatory for consciences, any rewards of piety, any difference of good and bad, any rewards after this life? This is the design of these words by proper interpretation: for if men shall die like dogs and sheep, they will certainly live like wolves and foxes; but he that believes the article of the resurrection, hath entertained the greatest demonstration in the world, that nothing can make us happy but the knowledge of God and conformity to the life and death of the holy Jesus. Here, therefore, are the great hinges of all religion: 1. Christ is already risen from the dead. 2. We also shall rise in God's time and our order. Christ is the first fruits. But there shall be a full harvest of the resurrection, and all shall rise. My text speaks only of the resurrection of the just, of them that belong to Christ; explicitly, I say, of these; and, therefore, directly of resurrection to life eternal. But because he also says there shall be an order for every man: and yet every man does not belong to Christ; therefore, indirectly, also he implies the more universal resurrection unto judgment: but this shall be the last thing that shall be done; for, according to the proverb of the Jews, Michael flies but with one wing and Gabriel with two: God is quick in sending angels of peace, and they fly apace; but the messengers of wrath come slowly: God is more hasty to glorify his servants than to condemn the wicked. And, therefore, in the story of Dives and Lazarus, we find that the beggar died first; the good man, Lazarus, was first taken away from his misery to his comfort, and afterwards the rich man died; and as the good, many times, die first, so all of them rise first, as if it were a matter of haste: and as the mother's breasts swell, and shoot, and long to give food to her babe, so God's bowels did yearn over his banished children, and he longs to cause them to eat and drink in his kingdom. And at last the wicked shall rise unto condemnation, for that must be done too; every man in his own order: first Christ, then Christ's servants, and, at last, Christ's enemies. The first of these is the great ground of our faith; the second is the consummation of all our hopes: the first is the foundation of God, that stands sure; the second is that superstructure that shall never perish: by the first we believe in God unto righteousness; by the second we live in God unto salvation: but the third, for that also is true, and must be considered, is the great affrightment of all them that live ungodly. But in the whole, Christ's resurrection and ours is the Alpha and Omega of a Christian; that as "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever," so may we in Christ become the morrow of the resurrection, the same or better than yesterday in our natural life; the same body and the same soul,

tied together in the same essential union, with this only difference, that not nature, but grace and glory, with an hermetic seal, give us a new signature whereby we shall no more be changed, but, like unto Christ, our Head, we shall become the same for ever. Of these I shall discourse in order. 1. That Christ, who is "the first fruits," is the first in this order: he is already risen from the dead. 2. We shall all take our turns, we shall die, and, as sure as death, we shall all rise again. And, 3. This very order is effective of the thing itself. That Christ is first risen, is the demonstration and certainty of ours; for because there is an order in this economy, the first in the kind is the measure of the rest. If Christ be the first fruits, we are the whole vintage; and we shall all die in the order of nature, and shall rise again in the order of Christ: "They that are Christ's," and are found so "at his coming," shall partake of his resurrection. But Christ first, then they that are Christ's: that is the order.

1. Christ is the first fruits; he is already risen from the dead: for he alone could not be held by death. "Free among the dead."—Death was sin's eldest daughter, and the grave-clothes were her first mantle; but Christ was Conqueror over both, and came to take that away, and to disarm this. This was a glory fit for the Head of mankind, but it was too great and too good to be easily believed by incredulous and weak-hearted man. It was at first doubted by all that were concerned; but they that saw it, had no reason to doubt any longer. But what is that to us who saw it not? Yes, very much: They doubted very much, that, by their confirmation, we might be established, and doubt no more." Mary Magdalene saw him first, and she ran with joy, and said "she had seen the Lord, and that he was risen from the dead; but they believed her not;—after that, divers women together saw him," and they told it, but had no thanks for their pains, and obtained no credit among the disciples: the two disciples that went to Emmaus, saw him, talked with him, ate with him, and they ran and told it: they told true, but nobody believed them: then St Peter saw him, but he was not yet got into the chair of the catholic church, they did not think him infallible, and so they believed him not at all. Five times in one day he appeared; for after all this, he appeared to the eleven; they were indeed transported with joy and wonder; but they would scarce believe their own eyes, and though they saw him, they doubted. Well all this was not enough; he was seen also of James, and suffered Thomas to thrust his hand into his side, and appeared to St Paul, and was seen by "five hundred brethren at once." So that there is no capacity of mankind, no time, no place, but had an ocular demonstration of his resurrection. He appeared to men and women, to the clergy and the laity, to sinners of both sexes; to weak men and to criminals, to doubters and deniers at home and abroad, in public and in private, in their houses and their journeys, unexpected and by appointment, betimes in the morning and late at night, to them in conjunction and to them in dispersion, when they did look for him and when they did not; he appeared upon earth to many, and to St Paul and St Stephen from heaven: so that we can require no greater testimony than all these are able to give us; and they saw for themselves and for us too, that the faith and certainty of the resurrection of Jesus might be conveyed to all that shall die, and follow Christ in their own order.

Now this being matter of fact, cannot be supposed infinite, but limited to time and place, and, therefore, to be proved by them who, at that time,

were upon the place ; good men and true, simple and yet losers by the bargain, many and united, confident and constant, preaching it all their life, and stoutly maintaining it at their death ; men that would not deceive others, and men that could not be deceived themselves, in a matter so notorious, and so proved, and so seen ; and if this be not sufficient credibility in a matter of fact, as this was, then we can have no story credibly transmitted to us, no records kept, no acts of courts, no narratives of the days of old, no traditions of our fathers, no memorials of them in the third generation. Nay, if from these we have not sufficient causes and arguments of faith, how shall we be able to know the will of Heaven upon earth ? unless God do not only tell it once, but always, and not only always to some men, but always to all men : for if some men must believe others, they can never do it in any thing more reasonably than in this ; and if we may not trust them in this, then, without a perpetual miracle, no man could have faith : for faith could never come by hearing, by nothing but by seeing. But if there be any use of history, any faith in men, any honesty in manners, any truth in human intercourse ; if there be any use of apostles or teachers, of ambassadors or letters, of ears or hearing ; if there be any such thing as the grace of faith, that is less than demonstration or intuition ; then we may be as sure that Christ, the first fruits, is already risen, as all these credibilities can make us. But let us take heed : as God hates a lie, so he hates incredulity ; an obstinate, a foolish, and pertinacious understanding. What we do every minute of our lives, in matters of title and great concernment, if we refuse to do it in religion, which yet is to be conducted, as all human affairs are, by human instruments, and arguments of persuasion proper to the nature of the thing, it is an obstinacy as cross to human reason, as it is to Divine faith.

But this article was so clearly proved, that presently it came to pass that men were no longer ashamed of the cross, but it was worn upon breasts, printed in the air, drawn upon foreheads, carried upon banners, put upon crowns imperial ; presently it came to pass that the religion of the despised Jesus did infinitely prevail ; a religion that taught men to be meek and humble, apt to receive injuries, but unapt to do any ; a religion that gave countenance to the poor and pitiful, in a time when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure had possessed the heart of all mankind ; a religion that would change the face of things, and the hearts of men, and break vile habits into gentleness and counsel ; that such a religion, in such a time, by the sermons and conduct of fishermen, men of mean breeding and illiberal arts, should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the sermons of the eloquent ; the power of princes and the interests of states, the inclinations of nature and the blindness of zeal, the force of custom, and the solicitation of passions, the pleasures of sin and the busy arts of the devil ; that is, against wit and power, superstition and wilfulness, fame and money, nature and empire, which are all the causes in this world that can make a thing impossible ; this, this is to be ascribed to the power of God, and is the great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus. Every thing was an argument for it, and improved it ; no objection could hinder it, no enemies destroy it ; whatsoever was for them, it made the religion to increase ; whatsoever was against them, made it to increase ; sunshine and storms, fair weather or foul, it was all one as to the event of things : for they were instruments in the hands

of God, who could make what himself should choose to be the product of any cause ; so that if the Christians had peace, they went abroad and brought in converts : if they had no peace but persecution, the converts came in to them. In prosperity, they allured and enticed the world by the beauty of holiness ; in affliction and trouble, they amazed all men with the splendour of their innocence, and the glories of their patience ; and quickly it was that the world became disciple to the glorious Nazarene, and men could no longer doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became so demonstrated by the certainty of them that saw it, and the courage of them that died for it, and the multitude of them that believed it ; who, by their sermons and their actions, by their public offices and discourses, by festivals and eucharists, by arguments of experience and sense, by reason and religion, by persuading rational men, and establishing believing Christians, by their living in the obedience of Jesus, and dying for the testimony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his kingdom, and his power, and his glory, into which he entered after his resurrection from the dead. For he is the First Fruits ; and if we hope to rise through him, we must confess that himself is first risen from the dead. That is the first particular.

2. There is an order for us also : we also shall rise again. The ashes of old Camillus shall stand up spritely from his urn : and the funeral fires shall produce a new warmth to the dead bones of all those who died under the arms of all the enemies of the Roman greatness. This is a less wonder than the former ; for if it was done once, it may be done again : for since it could never have been done but by a power that is infinite, that infinite must also be eternal and indeficient. By the same almighty power, which restored life to the dead body of our living Lord, we may all be restored to a new life in the resurrection of the dead.

When man was not, what power, what cause made him to be ? Whatsoever it was, it did then as great a work as to raise his body to the same being again ; and because we know not the method of Nature's secret changes, and how we can be fashioned beneath ' in the secret parts of the earth,' and cannot handle and discern the possibilities and seminal powers in the ashes of dissolved bones, must our ignorance in philosophy be put in balance against the articles of religion, the hopes of mankind, the faith of nations, and the truth of God ? And are our opinions of the power of God so low, that our understanding must be his measure ; and he shall be confessed to do nothing, unless it be made plain in our philosophy ? Certainly we have a low opinion of God, unless we believe he can do more things than we can understand ; but let us hear St Paul's demonstration : if the corn dies and lives again ; if it lays its body down, suffers alteration, dissolution, and death, —but, at the spring, rises again in the verdure of a leaf, in the fulness of the ear, in the kidneys of wheat ; if it proceeds from little to great, from nakedness to ornament, from emptiness to plenty, from unity to multitude, from death to life : be a Sadducee no more, shame not thy understanding, and reproach not the weakness of thy faith, by thinking that corn can be restored to life, and man cannot ; especially since, in every creature, the obediential capacity is infinite, and cannot admit degrees ; for every creature can be any thing under the power of God, which cannot be less than infinite.

But we find no obscure footsteps of this mystery even amongst the heathens : Pliny reports that Apion, the grammarian, by the use of the plant *osiris*, called Homer from his grave ; and in Valerius Maximus we find that *Ælius*

Tubero returned to life, when he was seated in his funeral pile ; and in Plutarch, that Soleus, after three days' burial, did live ; and in Valerius, that Eris Pamphilius did so after ten days. And it was so commonly believed, that Glaucus, who was choked in a vessel of honey, did rise again, that it grew to a proverb : " Glaucus having tasted honey, died and lived again." I pretend not to believe these stories to be true ; but from these instances it may be concluded, that they believed it possible that there should be a resurrection from the dead ; and natural reason, and their philosophy, did not wholly destroy their hopes and expectation to have a portion in this article.

For God, knowing that the great hopes of man, that the biggest endearment of religion, the sanction of private justice, the band of piety and holy courage,—does wholly derive from the article of the resurrection—was pleased not only to make it credible, but easy and familiar to us ; and we so converse every night with the image of death, that every morning we find an argument of the resurrection. Sleep and death have but one mother, and they have one name in common.

Charnel-houses are but 'cemeteries' or sleeping-places ; and they that die, are fallen asleep, and the resurrection is but an awakening and standing up from sleep : but in sleep our senses are as fast bound by Nature, as our joints are by the grave-clothes ; and unless an angel of God waken us every morning, we must confess ourselves as unable to converse with men, as we now are afraid to die and to converse with spirits. But, however, death itself is no more ; it is but darkness and a shadow, a rest and a forgetfulness. What is there more in death ? What is there less in sleep ? For do we not see by experience that nothing of equal loudness does awaken us sooner than a man's voice, especially if he be called by name ? and thus also it shall be in the resurrection : we shall be awakened by the voice of a man, and he that called Lazarus by name from his grave, shall also call us : for although St Paul affirms, " that the trumpet shall sound, and there shall be the voice of an archangel ;" yet this is not a word of nature, but of office and ministry." Christ himself is that archangel, and he shall " descend with a mighty shout," saith the apostle ;* " and all that are in the grave shall hear his voice," saith St John :† so that we shall be awakened by the voice of man, because we are only fallen asleep by the decree of God ; and when the cock and the lark call us up to prayer and labour, the first thing we see is an argument of our resurrection from the dead. I will not now insist upon the story of the rising bones seen every year in Egypt, nor the pretences of the chemists, that they, from the ashes of flowers, can reproduce, from the same materials, the same beauties in colour and figure ; for he that proves a certain truth from an uncertain argument, is like him that wears a wooden leg, when he hath two sound legs already ; it hinders his going, but helps him not : the truth of God stands not in need of such supporters ; nature alone is a sufficient preacher. Night and day ; the sun returning to the same point of east ; every change of species in the same matter ; generation and corruption : the eagle renewing her youth, and the snake her skin ; the silk-worm and the swallows ; the care of posterity, and the care of an immortal name ; winter and summer ; the fall and spring ; the Old Testament and the New ; the words of Job ; and

* 1 Thes. iv. 16.

† John v. 28.

the visions of the prophets ; the prayer of Ezekiel for the resurrection of the men of Ephraim ; and the return of Jonas from the whale's belly ; the histories of the Jews and the narratives of Christians ; the faith of believers and the philosophy of the reasonable ;—all join in the verification of this mystery. And amongst these heaps, it is not of the least consideration, that there was never any good man, who having been taught this article, but if he served God, he also relied upon this. If he believed God, he believed this ; and therefore St Paul says, that “ they who had no hope ” (meaning of the resurrection) “ were also atheists, and without God in the world.”—And it is remarkable what St Austin observes, that when the world saw the righteous Abel destroyed, and that the murderer outlived his crime, and built up a numerous family, and grew mighty upon earth,—they neglected the service of God upon that account, till God, in pity of their prejudice and foolish arguings, took Enoch up to heaven to recover them from their impieties, by showing them that their bodies and souls should be rewarded for ever in an eternal union. But Christ, the first fruits, is gone before, and himself did promise, that when himself was lifted up, he would draw all men after him : “ Every man in his own order ; first Christ, then they that are Christ's at his coming.”—And so I have done with the second particular ; not Christ only, but we also shall rise in God's time and our order.

But concerning this order I must speak a word or two, not only for the fuller handling the text, but because it will be matter of application of what hath been already spoken of the article of the resurrection.

3. First Christ, and then we : and we, therefore, because Christ is already risen : but you must remember, that the resurrection and exaltation of Christ was the reward of his perfect obedience and purest holiness ; and he calling us to an imitation of the same obedience, and the same perfect holiness, prepares a way for us to the same resurrection. If we, by holiness become the sons of God, as Christ was, we shall also, as he was, become the sons of God in the resurrection : but upon no other terms. So said our blessed Lord himself : “ Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon thrones judging the tribes of Israel.”* For as it was with Christ the first fruits, so it shall be with all Christians in their own order : as with the head, so it shall be with the members. He was the Son of God by love and obedience, and then became the Son of God by resurrection from the dead to life eternal, and so shall we ; but we cannot be so in any other way. To them that are Christ's, and to none else shall this be given : for we must know that God hath sent Christ into the world to be a great example and demonstration of the economy and dispensation of eternal life. As God brought Christ to glory, so he will bring us, but by no other method. He first obeyed the will of God, and patiently suffered the will of God ; he died and rose again, and entered into glory ; and so must we. Thus Christ is made “ the way, the truth, and the life :” that is, the true way to eternal life : he first trod this wine-press, and we must insist in the same steps, or we shall never partake of this blessed resurrection. He was made the Son of God in a most glorious manner, and we by him, by his merit, and by his grace, and by his example ; but other than this there is no way of salvation for us : that is the first and great effect of this glorious order.

* Luke, xiv. 14.

4. But there is one thing more in it yet : “ Every man in his own order ; first Christ and then they that are Christ’s :” but what shall become of them that are not Christ’s ? why there is an order for them too : first, “ they that are Christ’s, and then they that are not his :” “ Blessed and holy is he that hath his part in the first resurrection :” * there is a first and a second resurrection even after this life : “ The dead in Christ shall rise first :” † now blessed are they that have their portion here ; “ for upon these the second death shall have no power.” As for the recalling the wicked from their graves it is no otherwise in the sense of the spirit to be called a resurrection, than taking a criminal from the prison to the bar, is a giving of liberty. When poor Acilius Aviola had been seized on by an apoplexy, his friends, supposing him dead, carried him to his funeral pile ; but when the fire began to approach, and the heat to warm the body, he revived, and seeing himself encircled with funeral flames, called out aloud to his friends to rescue, not the dead, but the living Aviola from that horrid burning : but it could not be, he only was restored from his sickness to fall into death, and from his dull disease to a sharp and intolerable torment. Just so shall the wicked live again ; they shall receive their souls, that they may be a portion for devils ; they shall receive their bodies, that they may feel the everlasting burning ; they shall see Christ, that they may ‘ look on him whom they had pierced ;’ and they shall hear the voice of God passing upon them the intolerable sentence ; they shall come from their graves, that they may go into hell ; and live again, that they may die for ever. So have we seen a poor condemned criminal, the weight of whose sorrows, sitting heavily upon his soul, hath benumbed him into a deep sleep, till he hath forgotten his groans, and laid aside his deep sighings ; but, on a sudden, comes the messenger of death, and unbinds the poppy garland, scatters the heavy cloud that encircled his miserable head, and makes him return to acts of life, that he may quickly descend into death and be no more. So is every sinner that lies down in shame, and makes his grave with the wicked ; he shall indeed rise again, and be called upon by the voice of the archangel ; but then he shall descend into sorrows greater than the reason and the patience of a man, weeping and shrieking louder than the groans of the miserable children in the valley of Hinnom.

These, indeed, are sad stories, but true as the voice of God, and the sermons of the Holy Jesus. They are God’s words, and God’s decrees ; and I wish that all who profess the belief of these, would consider sadly what they mean. If ye believe the article of the resurrection, then you know, that, in your body, you shall receive what you did in the body, whether it be good or bad. It matters not now very much, whether our bodies be beauteous or deformed ; for if we glorify God in our bodies, God shall make our bodies glorious. It matters not much, whether we live in ease and pleasure, or eat nothing but bitter herbs ; the body that lies in dust and ashes, that goes stooping and feeble, that lodges at the foot of the cross, and dwells in discipline, shall be feasted at the eternal supper of the Lamb. And ever remember this, that beastly pleasures, and lying lips, and a deceitful tongue, and a heart that sendeth forth proud things, are no good dispositions to a blessed resurrection. But if any of you have lost the life of grace, and so forfeited all your title to a life of glory, betake yourselves to an early and an entire piety, that when, by this first resurrection, you

* Rev. xx. 6.

† 1 Thess. iv. 16.

have made this way plain before your face, you may with confidence expect a happy resurrection from your graves: for if it be possible that the Spirit, when it is dead in sin, can arise to a life of righteousness; much more it is easy to suppose, that the body, after death, is capable of being restored again: and this is a consequent of St Paul's argument: "If, when ye were enemies, ye were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;"* plainly declaring, that it is a harder and more wonderful thing for a wicked man to become the friend of God, than for one that is so, to be carried up to heaven and partake of his glory. The first resurrection is certainly the greater miracle: but he that hath risen once, may rise again; and this is as sure as that he that dies once, may die again, and die for ever. But he who partakes of the death of Christ by mortification, and of his resurrection by holiness of life and a holy faith, shall, according to the expression of the prophet Isaiah, "Enter into his chamber of death;"† when Nature and God's decree "shall shut the doors upon him, and there he shall be hidden for a little moment:" but then shall they that dwell in dust, awake and sing, with Christ's dead body shall they arise; all shall rise, but "every man in his own order; Christ, the first fruits, then they that are Christ's at his coming." Amen.

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY.

For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.—2 Sam. xiv. 14.

WHEN our blessed Saviour and his disciples viewed the temple, some one amongst them cried out, "Master, behold what fair, what great stones are here!" Christ made no other reply, but foretold their dissolution, and a world of sadness and sorrow which should bury that whole nation, when the teeming cloud of God's displeasure should produce a storm, which was the daughter of the biggest anger, and the mother of the greatest calamity, which ever crushed any of the sons of Adam: "The time shall come, that there shall not be left one stone upon another." The whole temple and the religion, the ceremonies ordained by God, and the nation beloved by God, and the fabric erected for the service of God, shall run to their own period, and lie down in their several graves. Whatsoever had a beginning, can also have an ending; and it shall die, unless it be daily watered with the purls flowing from the fountain of life, and refreshed with the dew of heaven, and the wells of God: and therefore God had provided a tree in Paradise to have supported Adam in his artificial immortality: immortality was not in his nature, but in the hands and arts, in the favour and superadditions of God. Man was always the same mixture of heat and cold, of dryness and moisture; ever the same weak thing, apt to feel rebellion in the humours, and

* Rom. v. 10.

† Is. xxvi. 20.

to suffer the evils of a civil war in his body natural : and, therefore, health and life was to descend upon him from heaven, and he was to suck life from a tree on earth ; himself being but ingrafted into a tree of life, and adopted into the condition of an immortal nature. But he that in the best of his days was but a scion of this tree of life, by his sin was cut off from thence quickly, and planted upon thorns, and his portion was for ever after among the flowers, which to-day spring and look like health and beauty, and in the evening they are sick, and at night are dead, and the oven is their grave : and, as before, even from our first spring from the dust on earth, we might have died, if we had not been preserved by the continual flux of a rare providence ; so now that we are reduced to the laws of our own nature, “ we must needs die.” It is natural, and, therefore, necessary : it is become a punishment to us, and therefore it is unavoidable ; and God hath bound the evil upon us by bands of natural and inseparable propriety, and by a supervening unalterable decree of heaven ; and we are fallen from our privilege and are returned to the condition of beasts, and buildings, and common things : and we see temples defiled unto the ground, and they die by sacrilege ; and great empires die by their own plenty and ease, full humours, and factious subjects ; and huge buildings fall by their own weight, and the violence of many winters eating and consuming the cement, which is the marrow of their bones ; and princes die like the meanest of their servants ; and every thing finds a grave and a tomb : and the very tomb itself dies by the bigness of its pompousness and luxury, and becomes as friable and uncombined dust, as the ashes of the sinner or the saint that lay under it, and is now forgotten in his bed of darkness. And to this catalogue of mortality man is enrolled with a “ It is appointed for all men to die once, and after death comes judgment : ” and if a man can be stronger than nature, or can wrestle with a decree of heaven, or can escape from a divine punishment by his own arts, so that neither the power nor the Providence of God, nor the laws of nature, nor the bands of eternal predestination can hold him, then he may live beyond the fate and period of flesh, and last longer than a flower : but if all these can hold us and tie us to conditions, then we must lay our heads down upon a turf, and entertain creeping things in the cells and little chambers of our eyes, and dwell with worms till time and death shall be no more. “ We must needs die ” — that is our sentence : but that is not all.

“ We are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.” Stay,

1. We are as water, weak, and of no consistence, always descending, abiding in no certain place, unless where we are detained with violence ; and every little breath of wind makes us rough and tempestuous, and troubles our faces ; every trifling accident discomposes us ; and, as the face of the waters wafting in a storm, so wrinkles itself, that it makes upon its forehead furrows deep and hollow like a grave ; so do our great and little cares and trifles first make the wrinkles of old age, and then they dig a grave for us ; and there is in nature nothing so contemptible, but it may meet with us in such circumstances, that it may be too hard for us in our weaknesses ; and the sting of a bee is a weapon sharp enough to pierce the finger of a child or the lip of a man ; and those creatures which nature hath left without weapons, yet they are armed sufficiently to vex those parts of men which are left defenceless and obnoxious to a sun-beam, to the roughness of a sour

grape, to the unevenness of a gravel-stone, to the dust of a wheel, or the unwholesome breath of a star looking awry upon a sinner.

2. But besides the weaknesses and natural decayings of our bodies, if chances and contingencies be innumerable, then no man can reckon our dangers, and the preternatural causes of our deaths : so that he is a vain person, whose hopes of life are too confidently increased by reason of his health : and he is too unreasonably timorous, who thinks his hopes at an end, when he dwells in sickness. For men die without rule, and with and without occasions ; and no man suspecting or foreseeing any of death's addresses, and no man in his whole condition is weaker than another. A man in a long consumption is fallen under one of the solemnities and preparations to death ; but at the same instant, the most healthful person is as near death, upon a more fatal and a more sudden, but a less discerned cause. There are but few persons upon whose foreheads every man can read the sentence of death, written in the lines of a lingering sickness, but they sometimes hear the passing-bell ring for stronger men, even long before their own knell calls at the house of their mother to open her womb, and make a bed for them. No man is surer of to-morrow than the weakest of his brethren. There are sicknesses that walk in darkness ; and there are exterminating angels, that fly wrapt up in the curtains of immateriality and an uncommunicating nature ; whom we cannot see, but we feel their force, and sink under their sword ; and from heaven the veil descends that wraps our heads in the fatal sentence. There is no age of man but it hath, proper to itself, some posterns and outlets for death, besides those infinite and open ports out of which myriads of men and women every day pass into the dark, and the land of forgetfulness. Infancy hath life but in effigy, or like a spark dwelling in a pile of wood : the candle is so newly lighted, that every little shaking of the taper, and every ruder breath of air puts it out, and it dies. Childhood is so tender, and yet so unwary ; so soft to all the impressions of chance, and yet so forward to run into them, that God knew there could be no security without the care and vigilance of an angel-keeper : and the eyes of parents and the arms of nurses, the provisions of art, and all the effects of human love and providence are not sufficient to keep one child from horrid mischiefs, from strange and early calamities and deaths, unless a messenger be sent from heaven to stand sentinel, and watch the very playings and sleepings, the eatings and drinkings of the children ; and it is a long time before nature makes them capable of help : for there are many deaths, and very many diseases to which poor babes are exposed ; but they have but very few capacities of physic ; to show that infancy is as liable to death as old age, and equally exposed to danger, and equally incapable of a remedy ; with this only difference, that old age hath diseases incurable by nature, and the diseases of childhood are incurable by art ; and both the states are the next heirs of death.

3. But all the middle way the case is altered : nature is strong, and art is apt to give ease and remedy, but still there is no security ; and there the case is not altered. 1. For there are so many diseases in men that are not understood. 2. So many new ones every year. 3. The old ones are so changed in circumstance, and intermingled with so many collateral complications. 4. The symptoms are oftentimes so alike. 5. Sometimes so hidden and fallacious. 6. Sometimes none at all ; as in the most sudden and most dangerous imposthumations. 7. And then, the diseases, in the in-

ward parts of the body, are oftentimes such, to which no application can be made. 8. They are so far off, that the effects of all medicines can no otherwise come to them, than the effect and juices of all meats; that is, not till after two or three alterations and decoctions, which change the very species of the medicament. 9. And after all this, very many principles in the art of physic are so uncertain, that after they have been believed seven or eight ages, and that upon them much of the practice hath been established, they come to be considered by a witty man, and others established in their stead; by which men must practise, and by which three or four generations of men more (as happens) must live or die. 10. And all this while the men are sick, and they take things that certainly make them sicker for the present and very uncertainly restore health for the future: that it may appear of what a large extent is human calamity; when God's providence hath not only made it weak and miserable upon the certain stock of a various nature, and upon the accidents of an infinite contingency; but even from the remedies which are appointed, our dangers and our troubles are certainly increased: so that we may well be likened to water; our nature is no stronger, our abode no more certain; if the sluices be opened, "it falls away and runneth apace;" if its current be stopped, it swells and grows troublesome, and spills over with a greater diffusion; if it be made to stand still, it putrifies: and all this we do. For,

4. In all the process of our health, we are running to our grave: we open our own sluices by viciousness and unworthy actions; we pour in drink, and let out life; we increase diseases, and know not how to bear them; we strangle ourselves with our own intemperance; we suffer the fevers and the inflammations of lust, and we quench our souls with drunkenness: we bury our understandings in loads of meat and surfeits: and then we lie down upon our beds, and roar with pain and disquietness of our souls: nay, we kill one another's souls and bodies with violence and folly, with the effects of pride and uncharitableness; we live and die like fools, and bring a new mortality upon ourselves; wars and vexatious cares, and private duels and public disorders, and every thing that is unreasonable, and every thing that is violent: so that now we may add this fourth gate to the grave: besides nature and chance, and the mistakes of art, men die with their own sins, and then enter into the grave in haste and passion, and pull the heavy stone of the monument upon their own heads. And thus we make ourselves like water spilt on the ground; we throw away our lives as if they were unprofitable (and indeed most men make them so:) we let our years slip through our fingers like water; and nothing is to be seen, but like a shower of tears upon a spot of ground; there is a grave digged, and a solemn mourning and a great talk in the neighbourhood, and when the days are finished, they shall be, and they shall be remembered no more: and that is like water too,—when it is spilt, "it cannot be gathered up again."

There is no redemption from the grave. Men live in their course and by turns; their light burns awhile, and then it burns blue and faint, and men go to converse with spirits, and then they reach the taper to another; and as the hours of yesterday can never return again, so neither can the man whose hours they were, and who lived them over once, he shall never come to live them again, and live them better. When Lazarus, and the widow's son of Nain and Tabitha, and the saints that appeared in Jeru

saalem at the resurrection of our blessed Lord arose, they came into this world, some as strangers only to make a visit, and all of them to manifest a glory: but none came upon the stock of a new life, or entered upon the stage as at first, or to perform the course of a new nature: and therefore it is observable, that we never read of any wicked person that was raised from the dead: Dives would fain have returned to his brother's house; but neither he, nor any one from him could be sent: but all the rest in the New Testament (one only excepted) were expressed to have been holy persons, or else by their age were declared innocent. Lazarus was beloved of Christ: those souls that appeared at the resurrection, were the souls of saints: Tabitha raised by St Peter was a charitable and a holy Christian: and the maiden of twelve years old, raised by our blessed Saviour, had not entered into the regions of choice and sinfulness: and the only exception of the widow's son, is indeed none at all, for in it the Scripture is wholly silent; and therefore it is very probable that the same process was used, God, in all other instances, having chosen to exemplify his miracles of nature to purposes of the spirit, and in spiritual capacities. So that, although the Lord of nature did break the bands of nature in some instances, to manifest his glory to succeeding great and never-failing purposes; yet (besides that this shall be no more) it was also instanced in such persons who were holy and innocent, and within the verge and comprehensions of the eternal mercy. We never read that a wicked person felt such a miracle, or was raised from the grave to try the second time for a crown; but where he fell, there he lay down dead, and saw the light no more.

This consideration I intend to you as a severe monitor and an advice of carefulness, that you order your affairs so that you may be partakers of the first resurrection; that is, from sin to grace, from the death of vicious habits, to the vigour, life, and efficacy of an habitual righteousness: for (as it happened to those persons in the New Testament now mentioned, to them, I say, in the literal sense) "Blessed are they that have part in the first resurrection; upon them the second death shall have no power:" meaning that they who, by the power of Christ and his Holy Spirit were raised to life again, were holy and blessed souls, and such who were written in the book of God; and that this grace happened to no wicked and vicious person: so it is most true in the spiritual and intended sense: you only that serve God in a holy life; you who are not dead in trespasses and sins: you who serve God with an early diligence and an unwearied industry, and a holy religion, you, and you only shall come to life eternal, you only shall be called from death to life; the rest of mankind shall never live again, but pass from death to death; from one death to another, to a worse; from the death of the body, to the eternal death of body and soul: and therefore in the Apostles' Creed there is no mention made of the resurrection of wicked persons; but of "the resurrection of the body to everlasting life." The wicked indeed shall be haled forth from their graves, from their everlasting prisons, where, in chains of darkness, they are kept unto the judgment of the great day: but this therefore cannot be called, a resurrection; but the solemnities of the eternal death; it is nothing but a new capacity of dying again; such a dying as cannot signify rest; but where death means nothing but an intolerable and never-ceasing calamity; and therefore these words of my text are otherwise to be understood of the wicked, otherwise of the godly: the wicked are spilt like water, and shall never be gathered

up again ; no not in the gatherings of eternity ; they shall be put into vessels of wrath, and set upon the flames of hell ; but that is not a gathering, but a scattering from the face and presence of God. But the godly also come under the sense of these words : they descend into their graves and shall no more be reckoned among the living : they have no concernment in all that is done under the sun. Agamemnon had no more to do with the Turk's armies invading and possessing that part of Greece, where he reigned, than had the Hippocentaur, who never had a being : and Cicero had no more interest in the present evils of Christendom, than we have to do with his boasted discovery of Catiline's conspiracy. What is it to me that Rome was taken by the Gauls ? and what is it now to Camillus, if different religions be tolerated amongst us ? These things that now happen concern the living, and they are made the scenes of our duty or danger respectively : and when our wives are dead, and sleep in charnel-houses, they are not troubled when we laugh loudly at the songs sung at the next marriage-feast ; nor do they envy when another snatches away the gleanings of their husbands' passion.

It is true, they envy not, and they lie in a bosom where there can be no murmur ; and they that are consigned to kingdoms, and to the feast of the marriage-supper of the Lamb, the glorious and eternal bridegroom of holy souls, they cannot think our marriages here, our lighter laughings and vain rejoicings, considerable, as to them. And "yet there is a relation continued still : " Aristotle said, that to affirm the dead take no thought for the good of the living, is a disparagement to the laws of that friendship, which, in their state of separation, they cannot be tempted to rescind. And certain it is, that, though our dead friends' affection to us is not to be estimated according to our low conceptions, yet it is not less, but much more than ever it was ; it is greater in degree, and of another kind.

But then we should do well also to remember, that in this world we are something besides flesh and blood ; that we may not, without violent necessities, run into new relations, but preserve the affections we bore to our dead when they were alive : we must not so live as if they were perished, but so as pressing forward to the most intimate participation of the communion of saints. And we also have some ways to express this relation, and to bear a part in this communion, by actions of intercourse with them, and yet proper to our state : such as are strictly performing the will of the dead, providing for, and tenderly and wisely educating their children, paying their debts, imitating their good example, preserving their memories privately, and publicly keeping their memorials. Now these instances of duty show, that the relation remains still ; and though the relict of a man or woman hath liberty to contract new relations, yet I do not find that they have liberty to cast off the old, as if there were no such thing as immortality of souls. Remember that we shall converse together again ; let us therefore never do any thing of reference to them, which we shall be ashamed of in that day when all secrets shall be discovered, and when we shall meet again in the presence of God : in the mean time, God watcheth concerning all their interest, and he will, in his time, both discover and recompense. For though, as to us, they are like water spilt ; yet, to God, they are as water fallen in the sea, safe and united in his comprehension and inclosures.

But we are not yet passed the consideration of the sentence : this descending to the grave is the lot of all men, "neither doth God respect the person

of any man." The rich is not protected for favour, nor the poor for pity ; the old man is not revered for his age, nor the infant regarded for his tenderness ; youth and beauty, learning and prudence, wit and strength, lie down equally in the dishonours of the grave. All men, and all natures, and all persons resist the addresses and solemnities of death, and strive to preserve a miserable and unpleasant life ; and yet they all sink down and die. For so have I seen the pillars of a building assisted with artificial props, bending under the pressure of a roof, and pertinaciously resisting the infallible and prepared ruin, 'till the determined day comes, and then the burden sunk upon the pillars, and disordered the aids and auxiliary rafters into a common ruin and a ruder grave : so are the desires and weak arts of man ; with little aids and assistances of care and physic, we strive to support our decaying bodies, and to put off the evil day ; but quickly that day will come, and then neither angels nor men can rescue us from our grave ; but the roof sinks down upon the walls, and the walls descend to the foundation ; and the beauty of the face, and the dishonours of the belly, the discerning head and the servile feet, the thinking heart and the working hand, shall be crushed into the confusion of a heap, and dwell with creatures of an equivocal production, with worms and serpents, the sons and daughters of our own bones, in a house of dirt and darkness.

Let us not think to be excepted or deferred : if beauty, or wit, or youth, or nobleness, or wealth, or virtue, could have been a defence and an excuse from the grave, we had not met here to-day to mourn upon the hearse of an excellent lady : and God only knows, for which of us next the mourners shall go about the streets, or weep in houses.

We have lived so many years ; and every day, and every minute, we make an escape from those thousands of dangers and deaths that encompass us round about : and such escapings we must reckon to be an extraordinary fortune ; and, therefore, that it cannot last long. Vain are the thoughts of man, who, when he is young and healthful, thinks he hath a long thread of life to run over, and that it is violent and strange for young persons to die ; and natural and proper only for the aged. It is as natural for a man to die by drowning as by a fever ; and what greater violence or more unnatural thing is it, that the horse threw his rider into the river, than that a drunken meeting cast him into a fever ? and the strengths of youth are as soon broken by the strong sicknesses of youth, and the stronger intemperance, as the weakness of old age by a cough, or an asthma, or a continual rheum : nay, it is more natural for young men and women to die, than for old ; because that is more natural, which hath more natural causes, and that is more natural, which is most common : but to die with age is an extreme rare thing ; and there are more persons carried forth to burial before the five-and-thirtieth year of their age, than after it : and, therefore, let no vain confidence make you hope for long life : if you have lived but little and are still in youth, remember that now you are in your biggest throng of dangers, both of body and soul ; and the proper sins of youth to which they rush infinitely and without consideration, are also the proper and immediate instruments of death. But if you be old, you have escaped long and wonderfully and the time of your escaping is out : you must not forever think to live upon wonders, or that God will work miracles to satisfy your longing follies, and unreasonable desires of living longer to sin and to the world. Go home and think to die, and what you would choose to be doing when you die, that

do daily : for you will all come to that pass to rejoice that you did so, or wish that you had : that will be the condition of every one of us : for ‘ God regardeth no man’s person.’

Well ! but all this you will think is but a sad story ; What ! we must die, and go to darkness and dishonour ; and we must die quickly, and we must quit all our delights, and all our sins, or do worse, infinitely worse ; and this is the condition of us all, from which none can be excepted ; every man shall be spilt and fall into the ground, and “ be gathered up no more.” Is there no comfort after all this ? “ shall we go from hence, and be no more seen,” and have no recompense ? Shall we exchange our fair dwellings for a coffin, our softer beds for the moistened and weeping turf, and our pretty children for worms ; and is there no allay to this huge calamity ? yes, there is : there is a *yet* in the text : “ for all this *yet* doth God devise means that his banished be not expelled from him :”—all this sorrow and trouble is but a phantasm, and receives its account and degrees from our present conceptions, and the proportion to our relishes and gust.

‘ Death is nothing but the middle point between two lives, between this and another :’ concerning which comfortable mystery the holy Scripture instructs our faith, and entertains our hope in these words : God is still the “ God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; for all do live to him ;” and the souls of saints are with Christ ; “ I desire to be dissolved,” saith St Paul, “ and to be with Christ, for that is much better :” and : “ Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them : for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens :” and this state of separation St Paul calls “ a being absent from the body, and being present with the Lord.” This is one of God’s means which he hath devised, that although our dead are like persons banished from this world, yet they are not expelled from God : they are ‘ in the hands of Christ ;’ they are ‘ in his presence ;’ they are, or shall be ‘ clothed with a house of God’s making ;’ ‘ they rest from all their labours ;’ ‘ all tears are wiped from their eyes,’ and all discontents from their spirits ; and in their state of separation, before the soul be re-invested with her new house, the spirits of all persons are with God, so secured, and so blessed, and so sealed up for glory, that this state of interval and imperfection is, in respect of its certain event and end, infinitely more desirable than all the riches, and all the pleasures, and all the vanities, and all the kingdoms of this world.

I will not venture to determine what are circumstances of the abode of holy souls in their separate dwellings ; and yet, possibly, that might be easier than to tell what or how the soul is and works in this world, where it is in the body ‘ as in a prison,’ in fetters and restraints ; for here the soul is decomposed and hindered ; it is not as it shall be, as it ought to be, as it was intended to be ; it is not permitted to its own freedom and proper operation ; so that all that we can understand of it is, that it is so incommoded with a troubled and abated instrument, that the object we are to consider, cannot be offered to us in a right line, in just and equal propositions : or if it could, yet because we are to understand the soul by the soul, it becomes not only a troubled and abused object, but a crooked instrument ; and we can consider it as a weak eye can behold a staff thrust into the waters of a troubled

river, the very water makes a refraction, and the storm doubles the refraction, and the water of the eye doubles the species, and there is nothing right in the thing: the object is out of its just place, and the medium is troubled, and the organ is impotent. But 'when the soul is entered into her own house, into the free regions of her rest,' and the neighbourhood of heavenly joys, then its operations are more spiritual, proper, and proportioned to its being; and, though we cannot see at such a distance, yet the object is more fitted, if we had a capable understanding; it is in itself in a more excellent and free condition.

That the soul is alive after our death, St Paul affirms: "Christ died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."* Now it were strange that we should be alive, and live with Christ, and yet do no act of life: the body when it is asleep, does many; and if the soul does none, the principle is less active than the instrument; but if it does any act at all in separation, it must necessarily be an act or effect of understanding; there is nothing else it can do, but this it can; for it is but a weak and unlearned proposition to say, that the soul can do nothing of itself, nothing without the phantasms and provisions of the body: for,

1. In this life the soul hath one principle clearly separate, abstracted, and immaterial; I mean 'the Spirit of grace,' which is a principle of life and action, and in many instances does not at all communicate with matter, as in the infusion, superinduction, and creation of spiritual graces.

2. As nutrition, generation, eating and drinking, are actions proper to the body and its state; so ecstasies, visions, raptures, intuitive knowledge and consideration of itself, acts of volition, and reflex acts of understanding, are proper to the soul.

3. And therefore it is observable that St Paul said, that "he knew not whether his visions and raptures were in or out of the body;" for by that we see his judgment of the thing, that one was as likely as the other, neither of them impossible or unreasonable; and therefore, that the soul is as capable of action alone as in conjunction.

4. If in the state of blessedness, there are some actions of the soul which do not pass through the body, such as contemplation of God, and conversing with spirits, and receiving those influences and rare immissions, which coming from the holy and mysterious Trinity, make up the crown of glory; it follows that the necessity of the body's ministry is but during the state of this life, and as long as it converses with fire and water, and lives with corn and flesh, and is fed by the satisfaction of material appetites; which necessity and manner of conversation, when it ceases, it can be no longer necessary for the soul to be served by phantasms and material representations.

5. And therefore, when the body shall be reunited, it shall be so ordered that then the body shall confess it gives not any thing, but receives all its being and operation, its manner and abode from the soul; and that then it comes not to serve a necessity, but to partake a glory: for as the operations of the soul, in this life, begin in the body, and by it the object is transmitted to the soul; so then they shall begin in the soul, and pass to the body; and as the operations of the soul, by reason of its dependence on the body, are animal, natural, and material; so in the resurrection, the body shall be spiritual, by reason of the pre-eminence, influence, and prime operation of

the soul. Now between these two states stands the state of separation, in which the operations of the soul are of a middle nature, that is, not so spiritual as in the resurrection, and not so animal and natural as in the state of conjunction.

To all which I add this consideration, that our souls have the same condition that Christ's soul had in the state of separation, because he took on him all our nature, and all our condition ; and it is certain, Christ's soul, in the three days of his separation, did exercise acts of life, of joy and triumph, and did not sleep, but visited the souls of the fathers, trampled upon the pride of devils, and satisfied those longing souls which were prisoners of hope : and from all this we may conclude, that the souls of all the servants of Christ are alive, and therefore do the actions of life, proper to their state ; and, therefore, it is highly probable that the soul works clearer, and understands brighter, and discourses wiser, and rejoices louder, and loves nobler, and desires purer, and hopes stronger, than it can do here.

But if these arguments should fail, yet the felicity of God's saints cannot fail : for suppose the body to be a necessary instrument, but out of tune and discomposed by sin and anger, by accident and chance, by defects and imperfections, yet that it is better than none at all ; and that if the soul works imperfectly with an imperfect body, that then she works not at all, when she hath none : and suppose also that the soul should be as much without sense or perception in death, as it is in a deep sleep, which is the image and shadow of death ; yet then God devises other means that his banished be not expelled from him. For,

2. God will restore the soul to the body, and raise the body to such a perfection, that it shall be an organ fit to praise him upon ; it shall be made spiritual to minister to the soul, when the soul is turned into a spirit ; then the soul shall be brought forth by angels from her incomparable and easy bed, from her rest in Christ's holy bosom, and be made perfect in her being, and in all her operations ; and this shall first appear by that perfection, which the soul shall receive, as instrumental to the last judgment ; for then she shall see clearly all the records of this world, all the register of her own memory : for all that we did in this life is laid up in our memories ; and though dust and forgetfulness be drawn upon them, yet when God shall lift us from our dust, then shall appear clearly all that we have done, written in the tables of our conscience, which is the soul's memory. We see many times, and in many instances, that a great memory is hindered and put out, and we, thirty years after, come to think of something that lay so long under a curtain ; we think of it suddenly, and without a line of deduction, or proper consequence : and all those famous memories of Simonides and Theodectes, of Hortensius and Seneca, of Sceptius, Metrodorus, and Carneades, of Cyneas the ambassador of Pyrrhus, are only the records better kept, and less disturbed by accident and disease : for even the memory of Herod's son of Athens, of Bathyllus, and the dullest person now alive, is so great, and by God made so sure a record of all that ever he did, that as soon as ever God shall but tune our instrument, and draw the curtains, and but light up the candle of immortality, there we shall find it all, there we shall see all, and the whole world shall see all ; then we shall be made fit to converse with God after the manner of spirits, we shall be like to angels.

In the mean time, although upon the persuasion of the former discourse, it be highly probable that the souls of God's servants do live in a state of present blessedness, and in the exceeding joys of a certain expectation of

the revelation of the day of the Lord, and the coming of Jesus ; yet it will concern us only to secure our state by holy living, and leave the event to God, that (as St Paul said) “ whether present or absent, whether sleeping or waking,” whether perceiving or perceiving not, “ we may be accepted of him ;” that when we are banished this world, and from the light of the sun, we may not be expelled from God, and from the light of his countenance, but that, from our beds of sorrow, our souls may pass into the bosom of Christ, and from thence to his right hand in the day of sentence : “ For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ;” and then if we have done well in the body, we shall never be expelled from the beatifical presence of God, but be domestics of his family, and heirs of his kingdom, and partakers of his glory. Amen.

CHARACTER OF FRANCES, COUNTESS OF CARBERRY.

I HAVE now done with my text, but yet am to make you another sermon. I have told you the necessity and state of death, it may be, too largely for such a sad story ; I shall, therefore, now with a better compendium teach you how to live, by telling you a plain narrative of a life, which if you imitate, and write after the copy, it will make that death shall not be an evil, but a thing to be desired, and to be reckoned among the purchases and advantages of your fortune. When Martha and Mary went to weep over the grave of their brother, Christ met them there, and preached a funeral sermon, discoursing of the resurrection, and applying to the purposes of faith, and confession of Christ, and glorification of God. We have no other, we can have no better precedent to follow : and now that we are come to weep over the grave of our dear sister, this rare personage, we cannot choose but have many virtues to learn, many to imitate, and some to exercise.

1. I choose not to declare her extraction and genealogy ; it was indeed fair and honourable ; but having the blessing to be descended from worthy and honoured ancestors, and herself to be adopted and ingrafted into a more noble family ; yet she felt such outward appendages to be none of hers, because not of her choice ; but the purchase of the virtues of others, which although they did engage her to do noble things, yet they would upbraid all degenerate and less honourable lives than were those, which began and increased the honour of the families. She did not love her fortune for making her noble ; but thought it would be a dishonour to her, if she did not continue a nobleness and excellency of virtue fit to be owned by persons relating to such ancestors. It is fit for us all to honour the nobleness of a family ; but it is also fit for them that are noble, to despise it, and to establish their honour upon the foundation of doing excellent things, and suffering in good causes, and despising dishonourable actions, and in communicating good things to others : for this is the rule in nature ; those creatures are most honourable, which have the greatest power and do the greatest good : and accordingly myself have been a witness of it, how this excellent lady would, by an act of humility and Christian abstraction, strip herself of all that fair appendage and exterior honour, which decked her person and her fortune, and desired to be owned by nothing but what was her own, that she might only be esteemed honour-

able, according to that which is the honour of a Christian, and a wise person.

2. She had a strict and severe education, and it was one of God's graces and favours to her: for being the heiress of a great fortune, and living amongst the throng of persons, in the sight of vanities and empty temptations, that is, in that part of the kingdom where greatness is too often expressed in great follies and great vices, God had provided a severe and angry education to chastise the forwardness of a young spirit and a fair fortune, that she might for ever be so far distant from a vice, that she might only see it and loath it, but never taste of it, so much as to be put to her choice whether she would be virtuous or no. God intending to secure this soul to himself, would not suffer the follies of the world to seize upon her, by way of too near a trial, or busy temptation.

3. She was married young; and besides her businesses of religion, seemed to be ordained in the providence of God to bring to this honourable family a part of a fair fortune, and to leave behind her a fairer issue, worth ten thousand times her portion: and as if this had been all the public business of her life, when she had so far served God's ends, God in mercy would also serve her's, and take her to an early blessedness.

4. In passing through which line of Providence, she had the art to secure her eternal interest, by turning her condition into duty, and expressing her duty in the greatest eminency of a virtuous, prudent, and rare affection, that hath been known in any example. I will not give her so low a testimony, as to say only that she was chaste; she was a person of that severity, modesty, and close religion as to that particular, that she was not capable of uncivil temptation; and you might as well have suspected the sun to smell of the poppy that he looks on, as that she could have been a person apt to be sullied by the breath of a foul question.

5. But that which I shall note in her, is that which I would have exemplar to all ladies, and to all women: she had a love so great for her lord, so entirely given up to a dear affection, that she thought the same things, and loved the same loves, and hated according to the same enmities, and breathed in his soul, and lived in his presence, and languished in his absence; and all that she was or did, was only for, and to, her dearest lord. And although this was a great enamel to the beauty of her soul, yet it might in some degrees be also a reward to the virtue of her lord: for she would often discourse it to them that conversed with her, that he would improve that interest which he had in her affection, to the advantages of God and of religion; and she would delight to say, that he called her to her devotions, he encouraged her good inclinations, he directed her piety, he invited her with good books; and then she loved religion, which she saw was not only pleasing to God, and an act or state of duty, but pleasing to her lord, and an act also of affection and conjugal obedience; and what at first she loved the more forwardly for his sake, in the using of religion, left such relishes upon her spirit, that she found in it amability enough to make her love it for its own. So God usually brings us to him by instruments of nature and affections, and then incorporates us into his inheritance by the more immediate relishes of heaven, and the secret things of the Spirit. He only was (under God) the light of her eyes, and the cordial of her spirits, and the guide of her actions, and the measure of her affections, till her affections swelled up into a religion, and then it could go no higher,

but was confederate with those other duties which made her dear to God : which rare combination of duty and religion, I choose to express in the words of Solomon ; “She forsook not the guide of her youth, nor brake the covenant of her God.”*

6. As she was a rare wife, so she was an excellent mother : for in so tender a constitution of spirit as hers was, and in so great a kindness towards her children, there hath seldom been seen a stricter and more curious care of their persons, their deportment, their nature, their disposition, their learning, and their customs : and if ever kindness and care did contest, and make parties in her, yet her care and her severity was ever victorious ; and she knew not how to do an ill turn to their severer part, by her more tender and forward kindness. And as her custom was, she turned this also into love to her lord : for she was not only diligent to have them bred nobly and religiously, but also was careful and solicitous, that they should be taught to observe all the circumstances and inclinations, the desires and wishes of their father ; as thinking that virtue to have no good circumstances, which was not dressed by his copy, and ruled by his lines, and his affections : and her prudence, in the managing her children, was so singular and rare, that whenever you mean to bless this family, and pray a hearty and a profitable prayer for it, beg of God, that the children may have those excellent things which she designed to them, and provided for them in her heart and wishes ; that they may live by her purposes, and may grow thither, whether she would fain have brought them. All these were great parts of an excellent religion, as they concerned her greatest temporal relations.

7. But if we examine how she demeaned herself towards God, there also you will find her not of a common, but of an exemplar piety : she was a great reader of Scripture, confining herself to great portions every day ; which she read, not to the purposes of vanity, and impertinent curiosities, not to seem knowing, or to become talking, not to expound and rule ; but to teach her all her duty, to instruct her in the knowledge and love of God and of her neighbours ; to make her more humble, and to teach her to despise the world and all its gilded vanities ; and that she might entertain passions wholly in design and order to heaven. I have seen a female religion that wholly dwelt upon the face and tongue ; that like a wanton and an undressed tree, spends all its juice in suckers and irregular branches, in leaves and gum, and after all such goodly outsides, you should never eat an apple, or be delighted with the beauties, or the perfumes of a hopeful blossom. But the religion of this excellent lady was of another constitution ; it took root downward in humility, and brought forth fruit upward in the substantial graces of a Christian, in charity and justice, in chastity and modesty, in fair friendships and sweetness of society : she had not very much of the forms and outsides of godliness, but she was hugely careful for the power of it, for the moral, essential, and useful parts ; such which would make her be, not seem to be, religious.

8. She was a very constant person at her prayers, and spent all her time, which nature did permit to her choice, in her devotions, and reading and meditating, and the necessary offices of household government ; every one of which is an action of religion, some by nature, some by adoption. To these also, God gave her a very great love to hear the word of God preach-

* Prov. ii. 17.

ed ; in which, because I had sometimes the honour to minister to her, I can give her this certain testimony that she was a diligent, watchful, and attentive hearer : and to this, had so excellent a judgment, that if ever I saw a woman whose judgment was to be revered, it was her's alone : and I have sometimes thought that the eminency of her discerning faculties did reward a pious discourse, and placed it in the regions of honour and usefulness, and gathered it up from the ground, where commonly such homilies are spilt, or scattered in neglect and inconsideration. But her appetite was not soon satisfied with what was useful to her soul : she was also a constant reader of sermons, and seldom missed to read one every day ; and that she might be full of instruction and holy principles, she had lately designed to have a large book, in which she purposed to have a stock of religion transcribed in such assistances as she would choose, that she might be "readily furnished and instructed to every good work." But God prevented that, and hath filled her desires, not out of cisterns and little aqueducts, but hath carried her to the fountain, where "she drinks of the pleasures of the river," and is full of God.

9. She always lived a life of much innocence, free from the violences of great sins ; her person, her breeding, her modesty, her honour, her religion, her early marriage, the guide of her soul, and the guide of her youth, were as so many fountains of restraining grace to her, to keep her from the dishonours of a crime. "It is good to bear the yoke of the Lord from our youth :" and though she did so, being guarded by a mighty Providence, and a great favour and grace of God, from staining her fair soul with the spots of hell, yet she had strange fears and early cares upon her ; but these were not only for herself, but in order to others, to her nearest relatives : for she was so great a lover of this honourable family, of which she was now a mother, that she desired to become a channel of great blessings to it unto future ages, and was extremely jealous lest any thing should be done, or lest any thing had been done, though an age or two since, which should entail a curse upon the innocent posterity ; and, therefore, (although I do not know that ever she was tempted with an offer of the crime,) yet she did infinitely remove all sacrilege from her thoughts, and delighted to see her estate of a clear and disentangled interest : she would have no mingled rights with it ; she would not receive any thing from the church, but religion and a blessing ; and she never thought a curse and a sin far enough off, but would desire it to be infinitely distant ; and that as to this family God had given much honour, and a wise head to govern it, so he would also for ever give many more blessings : and because she knew the sins of parents descend upon children, she endeavoured, by justice and religion, by charity and honour, to secure that her channel should convey nothing but health, and a fair example, and a blessing.

10. And, though her accounts of God were made up of nothing but small parcels, little passions, and angry words, and trifling discontents, which are the allays of the piety of the most holy persons ; yet she was early at her repentance ; and toward the latter end of her days, grew so fast in religion, as if she had a revelation of her approaching end, and, therefore, that she must go a great way in a little time : her discourses more full of religion, her prayers more frequent, her charity increasing, her forgiveness more forward, her friendships more communicative, her passion more under discipline ; and so she trimmed her lamp not thinking her night was so near,

but that it might shine also in the day-time, in the temple, and before the altar of incense.

But in this course of hers there was some circumstances, and some appendages of substance, which were highly remarkable.

1. In all her religion, and in all her actions of relation towards God, she had a strange evenness and untroubled passage, sliding toward her ocean of God and of infinity, with a certain and silent motion. So have I seen a river, deep and smooth, passing with a still foot and a sober face, and paying to the 'fiscus,' the great 'exchequer' of the sea, the prince of all the watery bodies, a tribute large and full; and hard by it, a little brook skipping and making a noise upon its unequal and narrow bottom; and after all its talking and bragged motion, it paid to its common audit no more than the revenues of a little cloud, or a contemptible vessel: so have I sometimes compared the issues of her religion to the solemnities and famed outsides of another's piety. It dwelt upon her spirit, and was incorporated with the periodical work of every day: she did not believe that religion was intended to minister to fame and reputation, but to pardon of sins, to the pleasure of God, and the salvation of souls. For religion is like the breath of heaven; if it goes abroad into the open air, it scatters and dissolves like camphire; but if it enters into a secret hollowness, into a close conveyance, it is strong and mighty, and comes forth with vigour and great effect at the other end, at the other side of this life, in the days of death and judgment:

2. The other appendage of her religion, which also was a great ornament to all the parts of her life, was a rare modesty and humility of spirit, a confident despising and undervaluing of herself. For though she had the greatest judgment, and the greatest experience of things and persons, that I ever yet knew in a person of her youth, and sex, and circumstances; yet, as if she knew nothing of it, she had the meanest opinion of herself; and like a fair taper, when she shined to all the room, yet round about her own station, she had cast a shadow and a cloud, and she shined to every body but herself. But the perfectness of her prudence and excellent parts could not be hid; and all her humility, and arts of concealment, made the virtues more amiable and illustrious. For as pride sullies the beauty of the fairest virtues, and makes our understanding but like the craft and learning of a devil; so humility is the greatest eminency, and art of publication in the whole world; and she, in all her arts of secrecy and hiding her worthy things, was but "like one that hideth the wind, and covers the ointment of her right hand."

I know not by what instrument it happened; but when death drew near, before it made any show upon her body, or revealed itself by a natural signification, it was conveyed to her spirit: she had a strange secret persuasion that the bringing this child should be her last scene of life; and we have known, that the soul, when she is about to disrobe herself of her upper garment, sometimes speaks rarely; sometimes it is prophetic; sometimes God, by a superinduced persuasion wrought by instruments, or accidents of his own, serves the ends of his own Providence, and the salvation of the soul: but so it was, that the thought of death dwelt long with her, and grew from the first steps of fancy and fear, to a consent,—from thence to a strange credulity, and expectation of it; and without the violence of sickness she died, as if she had done it voluntarily, and by design, and for fear her expectation should have been deceived; or that she should seem to have had

an unreasonable fear or apprehension ; or rather, ‘ she died as if she had been glad of the opportunity.’

And in this I cannot but adore the Providence and admire the wisdom and infinite mercies of God ; for having a tender and soft, a delicate and fine constitution and breeding, she was tender to pain, and apprehensive of it as a child’s shoulder is of a load and burden : and in her often discourses of death, which she would renew willingly and frequently, she would tell, that “ she feared not death, but she feared the sharp pains of death.” The being dead, and being freed from the troubles and dangers of this world, she hoped would be for her advantage, and therefore, that was no part of her fear ; but she believing the pangs of death were great, and the use and aids of reason little, had reason to fear lest they should do violence to her spirit, and the decency of her resolution. But God, that knew her fears and her jealousy concerning herself, fitted her with a death so easy, so harmless, so painless, that it did not put her patience to a severe trial. It was not in all appearance of so much trouble as two fits of a common ague, so careful was God to demonstrate to all that stood in that sad attendance, that this soul was dear to him,—and that since she had done so much of her duty towards it, he that began would also finish her redemption by an act of a rare Providence and a singular mercy. Blessed be that goodness of God, who does so careful actions of mercy for the ease and security of his servants ! But this one instance was a great demonstration, that the apprehension of death is worse than the pains of death ; and that God loves to reprove the unreasonableness of our fears, by the mightiness and by the arts of his mercy.

She had in her *sickness*, if I may so call it,—or rather in the solemnities and graver preparations towards death,—some curious and well-becoming fears concerning the final state of her soul ; but from thence she passed into ‘ a kind of trance ;’ and as soon as she came forth of it, as if it had been a vision or that she had conversed with an angel, and from his hand had received a label or scroll of the book of life, and there seen her name enrolled, she cried out aloud, “ Glory be to God on high ! now I am sure I shall be saved.” Concerning which manner of discoursing we are wholly ignorant what judgment can be made ; but, certainly, there are strange things in the other world, and so there are in all the immediate preparations to it ; and a little glimpse of heaven, a minute’s conversing with an angel, any ray of God, any communication extraordinary from the Spirit of comfort, which God gives to his servants in strange and unknown manners, are infinitely far from illusions, and they shall then be understood by us when we feel them, and when our new and strange needs shall be refreshed by such unusual visitations.

But I must be forced to use summaries and arts of abbreviature in the enumerating those things, in which this rare personage was dear to God and to all her relatives.

If we consider her person, she was in the flower of her age, of a temperate, plain, and natural diet, without curiosity or an intemperate palate ; she spent less time in dressing than many servants ; her recreations were little and seldom, her prayers often, her reading much ; she was of a most noble and charitable soul, a great lover of honourable actions, and as great a despiser of base things : hugely loving to oblige others, and very unwilling to be in arrear to any upon the stock of courtesies and liberality : so

free in all acts of favour, that she would not stay to hear herself thanked, as being unwilling that what good went from her to a needful or an obliged person, should ever return to her again. She was an excellent friend, and hugely dear to very many, especially to the best and most discerning persons; to all that conversed with her, and could understand her great worth and sweetness. She was of an honourable, a nice, and tender reputation; and of the pleasures of this world, which were laid before her in heaps, she took a very small and inconsiderable share, as not loving to glut herself with vanity, or take her portion of good things here below.

If we look on her as a wife, she was chaste and loving, fruitful, and discreet, humble and pleasant, witty and compliant, rich and fair: and wanted nothing to the making her a principal and precedent to the best wives of the world, but a long life and a full age.

If we remember her as a mother, she was kind and severe, careful and prudent, very tender, and not at all fond; a greater lover of her children's souls than of their bodies, and one that would value them more by the strict rules of honour and proper worth, than by their relation to herself.

Her servants found her prudent and fit to govern, and yet open-handed and apt to reward; a just exactor of their duty, and a great rewarder of their diligence.

She was in her house a comfort to her dearest lord, a guide to her children, a rule to her servants, an example to all.

But as she related to God in the offices of religion, she was even and constant, silent and devout, prudent and material; she loved what she now enjoys, and she feared what she never felt, and God did for her what she never did expect: her fears went beyond all her evil; and yet the good which she hath received, was, and is, and ever shall be, beyond all her hopes.

She lived as we all should live, and she died as I fain would die.

THE LITERAL AND SPIRITUAL SENSE OF SCRIPTURE.

IN all the interpretations of Scripture, the literal sense is to be presumed and chosen, unless there be evident cause to the contrary. The reasons are plain; because the literal sense is natural, and it is first, and it is most agreeable to some things, in their whole kind; not indeed to prophecies, nor to the teachings of the learned, nor those cryptic ways of institution by which the ancients did hide a light, and keep it in a dark lantern from the temeration of ruder handlings, and popular preachers: but the literal sense is agreeable to laws, to the publication of commands, to the revelation of the Divine will, to the concerns of the vulgar, to the foundations of faith, and to all the notice of things, in which the idiot (i. e. the private person) is as much concerned as the greatest clerks. From which proposition, these three corollaries will properly follow, 1. That God hath plainly and literally described all his will, both in belief and practice, in which our essential duty, the duty of all men, is concerned. 2. That, in plain expressions, we are to look for our duty, and not in the more secret places and darker corners of the Scripture. 3. That you may regularly, certainly, and easily do your duty to the people, if you read and literally expound the

plain sayings, and easily expressed commandments, and promises, and threatenings of the Gospel, and the Psalms, and the prophets.

3. But then remember this also ; that not only the grammatical or prime signification of the word is the literal sense ; but whatsoever in the prime intention of the speaker, that is the literal sense ; though the word be to be taken metaphorically, or by translation signify more things than one. “ The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous ;” this is literally true ; and yet it is as true, that God hath no eyes properly ; but by ‘ eyes ’ are meant, God’s Providence ; and though this be not the first literal sense of the word ‘ eyes,’ the signification at first imposed and contingently ; it is that signification, which was secondarily imposed, and by reason and proportion. Thus, when we say, ‘ God cares for the righteous,’ it will not suppose that God can have any anxiety or afflictive thoughts ; but ‘ he cares ’ does as truly and properly signify provision, as caution ; beneficence, as fear ; and therefore the literal sense of it is, that ‘ God provides good things for the righteous.’ For in this case the rule of Abulensis is very true ; “ the literal sense is always true ;” that is, all that is true, which the Spirit of God intended to signify by the words, whether he intended the first or second signification ; whether that of voluntary and contingent, or that of analogical and rational institution. “ Other sheep have I,” said Christ, “ which are not of this fold :” that he did not mean this of the wool-bearing flock is notorious ; but of the Gentiles to be gathered into the privileges and fold of Israel : for in many cases, the first literal sense is the hardest, and sometimes impossible, and sometimes inconvenient : and when it is in any of these, although we are not to recede from the literal sense ; yet we are to take the second signification, the tropological or figurative. “ If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out,” said Christ : and yet no man digs his eyes out ; because the very letter or intention of this command bids us only to throw away that, which if we keep, we cannot avoid sin : for sometimes the letter tells the intention, and sometimes the intention declares the letter ; and that is properly the literal sense, which is the first meaning of the command in the whole complexion : and in this, common sense, and a vulgar reason will be a sufficient guide, because there is always some other thing spoken by God, or some principle naturally implanted in us, by which we are secured in the understanding of the Divine command. “ He that does not hate father and mother for my sake, is not worthy of me :” the literal sense of ‘ hating ’ used in Scripture is not always ‘ malice,’ but sometimes a ‘ less loving ;’ and so Christ also hath expounded it : “ He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.”—But I shall not insist longer on this ; he that understands nothing but his grammar, and hath not conversed with men and books, and can see no farther than his finger’s ends, and makes no use of his reason, but for ever will be a child ; he may be deceived in the literal sense of Scripture ; but then he is not fit to teach others : but he that knows, words signify rhetorically, as well as grammatically, and have various proper significations, and which of these is the first is not always of itself easy to be told ; and remembers also that God hath given him reason, and observation, and experience, and conversation with wise men, and the proportion of things, and the end of the command, and parallel places of Scripture, in other words to the same purpose ;—will conclude, that, since in plain places, all the duty of man is contained, and that the literal sense is always true, and, unless men be wilful

or unfortunate, they may, with a small proportion of learning, find out the literal sense of an easy moral proposition ;—will, I say, conclude, that if we be deceived, the fault is our own ; but the fault is so great, the man so supine, the negligence so inexcusable, that the very consideration of human infirmity is not sufficient to excuse such teachers of others, who hallucinate or prevaricate in this. The Anthropomorphites fell foully in this matter, and supposed God to have a face, and arms, and passions, as we have ; but they prevailed not : but the church of Rome hath erred greatly in pertinacious adhering, not to the letter, but to the grammar ; nor to that, but in one line or signification of it : and ‘this is my body’ must signify nothing but grammatically ; and though it be not, by their own confessions, to be understood without divers figures, in the whole complexion, yet peevishly and perversely, they will take it by the wrong handle ; and this they have passed into a doctrine, that is against sense and reason, and experience, and Scripture, and tradition, and the common interpretation of things, and public peace and utility, and every thing by which mankind ought to be governed and determined.

4. I am to add this one thing more : that we admit in the interpretation of Scripture but one literal sense ; I say, but one prime literal sense ; for the simplicity and purity of the Spirit, and the philanthropy of God will not admit that there should, in one single proposition, be many intricate meanings, or that his sense should not certainly be understood, or that the people be abused by equivocal and doubtful senses ; this was the way of Jupiter in the sands, and Apollo Pythius, and the devil’s oracles : but be it far from the wisdom of the Spirit of God.

5. But then take in this caution to it ; that although there be but one principal literal sense ; yet others that are subordinate, may be intended subordinately ; and others that are true by proportion, or that first intention, may be true for many reasons, and every reason applicable to a special instance ; and all these may be intended as they signify, that is, one only by prime design, and the other by collateral consequence. Thus we are the sons of God, by adoption, by creation, by favour, by participation of the Spirit, by the laver of regeneration : and every man, for one or other of these reasons, can say, “Our Father which art in heaven ;” and these are all parts of the literal sense, not different, but subordinate and by participation : but more than one prime literal sense must not be admitted.

The sum is this ; he that with this moderation and these measures, construes the plain meaning of the Spirit of God, and expounds the articles of faith and the precepts of life, according to the intention of God, signified by his own words, in their first or second signification, cannot easily be cozened into any heretical doctrine ; but his doctrine will be the pure word and mind of God.

2. There is another sense or interpretation of Scripture, and that is mystical or spiritual ; and this relates principally to the Old Testament : thus the waters of the deluge did signify the waters of baptism ; Sarah and Agar, the law and the Gospel ; the brazen serpent, the passion of Christ ; the conjunction of Adam and Eve, the communion of Christ and his church ; and this is called the spiritual sense, St Paul being our warrant ; “Our fathers ate of the same spiritual meat, and drank of that same spiritual rock ;” now that rock was not spiritual, but of solid stone ; but it signified spiritually ; for “that rock was Christ.”—This sense the doctors divide into tropological, allegorical, and anagogical,—for method’s sake, and either to dis-

tinguish the things, or to amuse the persons: for these relate but to the several spiritual things, signified by divers places; as matters of faith, precepts of manners, and celestial joys: you may make more if you please, and yet these are too many to trouble men's heads, and to make theology an art and craft, to no purpose. 'This spiritual sense is that which the Greeks call 'the sense that lies under the cover of words:' concerning this I shall give you these short rules, that your doctrine be pure and without heretical mixtures, and the leaven of false doctrines; for, above all things, this is to be taken care of.

1. Although every place of Scripture hath a literal sense, either proper or figurative, yet every one hath not a spiritual and mystical interpretation; and, therefore, Origen was blamed by the ancients for forming all into spirit and mystery: one place was reserved to punish that folly. Thus the followers of the family of love, and the quakers, expound all the articles of our faith, all the hopes of a Christian, all the stories of Christ, into such a clancular and retired sense, as if they had no meaning by the letter, but were only an hieroglyphic or a Pythagorean scheme, and not to be opened but by a private key, which every man pretends to be borrowed from the Spirit of God, though made in the forges here below. In this case men do as Jerome said of Origen, "every man believes God meant as he intended, and so he will obtrude his own dreams instead of sacraments." Therefore,

2. Whoever will draw spiritual senses from any history of the Old or New Testament, must first allow the literal sense, or else he will soon deny an article of necessary belief. A story is never the less true, because it is intended to profit as well as to please; and the narrative may well establish or insinuate a precept, and instruct with pleasure; but if, because there is a jewel in the golden cabinet, you will throw away the enclosure, and deny the story that you may look out a mystical sense, we shall leave it arbitrary for any man to believe or disbelieve what story he please; and Eve shall not be made of the rib of Adam, and the garden of Eden shall be no more than the Hesperides, and the story of Jonas a well-dressed fable: and I have seen all the Revelation of St John turned into a moral commentary, in which every person can signify any proposition, or any virtue, according as his fancy chimes. This is too much, and, therefore, comes not from a good principle.

3. In moral precepts, in rules of polity and economy, there is no other sense to be inquired after but what they bear upon the face; for he that thinks it necessary to turn them into some farther spiritual meaning supposes that it is a disparagement to the Spirit of God to take care of governments, or that the duties of princes and masters are no great concerns, or not operative to eternal felicity, or that God does not provide for temporal advantages; for if these things be worthy concerns, and if God hath taken care of all our good, and if "godliness be profitable to all things, and hath the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come," there is no necessity to pass on to more abstruse senses, when the literal and proper hath also in it instrumentality enough towards very great spiritual purposes. "God takes care" for servants, yea "for oxen" and all the beasts of the field; and the letter of the command enjoining us to use them with mercy, hath in it an advantage even upon the spirit and whole frame of a man's soul; and, therefore, let no man tear those Scriptures to other meanings beyond their own intentions and provisions. In these cases a spiritual sense is not to be inquired after.

4. If the letter of the story infers any indecency or contradiction, then it

is necessary that a spiritual or mystical sense be thought of ; but never else is it necessary. It may in other cases be useful, when it does advantage to holiness ; and may be safely used, if used modestly ; but because this spiritual or mystical interpretation, when it is not necessary, cannot be certainly proved, but relies upon fancy, or at most some light inducement, no such interpretation can be used as an argument to prove an article of faith, nor relied upon in matters of necessary concern. The “ three measures of meal,” in the Gospel, are but an ill argument to prove the blessed and eternal Trinity : and it may be, the three angels that came to Abraham, will signify no more than the two that came to Lot, or the single one to Manoah or St John. This divine mystery relies upon a more sure foundation ; and he makes it unsure, that causes it to lean upon an unexpounded vision, that was sent to other purposes. Searching for articles of faith in the by-paths and corners of secret places, leads not to faith but to infidelity, and by making the foundations unsure, causes the articles to be questioned.

I remember that Agricola, in his book “ *De Animalibus Subterraneis*,” tells of a certain kind of spirits that use to converse in mines, and trouble the poor labourers : they dig metals, they cleanse, they cast, they melt, they separate, they join the ore ; but when they are gone, the men find just nothing done, not one step of their work set forward. So it is in the books and expositions of many men : they study, they argue, they expound, they confute, they reprove, they open secrets, and make new discoveries ; and when you turn the bottom upwards, up starts nothing ; no man is the wiser, no man is instructed, no truth discovered, no proposition cleared, nothing is altered, but that much labour and much time is lost : and this is manifest in nothing more than in books of controversy, and in mystical expositions of Scripture : Like Isidore, who in contemplation of a pen, observed, that the nib of it was divided into two, but yet the whole body remained one : he found a knack in it, and thought it was a mystery. Concerning which I shall need to say no more but that they are safe, when they are necessary, and they are useful when they teach better, and they are good when they do good ; but this is so seldom, and so by chance, that oftentimes if a man be taught truth he is taught it by a lying master ; it is like being cured by a good witch, an evil spirit hath a hand in it ; and if there be not error and illusion in such interpretations, there is very seldom any certainty.

“ What shall I do to my vineyard,”* said God ? “ I will take away the hedge :” that is, saith the gloss, “ the custody of their angel guardians.” And God says, “ Manasseh hath devoured his own shoulders ;” that is, say the doctors, “ hath removed his governors,” his princes, and his priests. It is a sad complaint ’tis true, but what it means is the question. But although these senses are pious, and may be used for illustration and the prettiness of discourse, yet there is no further certainty in them than what the one fancies and the other is pleased to allow. But if the spiritual sense be proved evident and certain, then it is of the same efficacy as the literal ; for it is according to that letter by which God’s Holy Spirit was pleased to signify his meaning, and it matters not how he is pleased to speak, so we understand his meaning. And, in this sense, that is true which is affirmed by St Gregory : ‘ sometimes our faith is built up by the mystical words of the Spirit of God.’ But because it seldom happens that they can be proved,

* Isaiah, v.

therefore you are not to feed your flocks with such herbs whose virtue you know not, of whose wholesomeness or powers of nourishing you are wholly, or for the most part, ignorant. We have seen and felt the mischief, and sometimes derided the absurdity. "God created the sun and the moon," said Moses; that is, said the extravagants of pope Boniface VIII, 'the pope and the emperor.' And "Behold here are two swords," said St Peter: "It is enough," said Christ; enough for St Peter; and so he got the *two* swords, the *temporal* and *spiritual*, said the gloss upon that text. Of these things there is no beginning and no end, no certain principles, and no good conclusion.

These are the two ways of expounding all Scriptures; these are as "the two witnesses of God;" by the first of which he does most commonly, and by the latter of which he does sometimes, declare his meaning; and in the discovery of these meanings, the measures which I have now given you are the general land-marks, and are sufficient to guide us from destructive errors.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

GOD is our God when we die, if we be his servants while we live; and to be our God signifies very much good to us. He will rescue us from the powers of hell; the devil shall have no part or portion in us; we shall be kept in safe custody, we shall be in the hands of Christ, out of which all the powers of hell shall never snatch us; and therefore we may die with confidence, if we die with a good conscience; we have no cause of fear, if we have just grounds to hope for pardon. The Turks have a saying, that the Christians do not believe themselves, when they talk such glorious things of heaven and the state of separation; for if they did, they would not be so afraid to die: but they do not so well consider that Christians believe all this well enough, but they believe better than they live; and therefore they believe and tremble, because they do not live after the rate of going to heaven; they know that for good men glorious things are prepared; but 'Tophet is prepared for evil kings,' and unjust rulers, for vicious men and degenerate Christians; there is a hell for accursed souls, and men live without fear of it so long, till their fear as soon as it begins in an instant passes into despair and the fearful groans of the damned. It is no wonder to see men so unwilling to die, to be impatient of the thought of death, to be afraid to make their will, to converse with the solemn scarecrow. He that is fit to die, must have long dwelt with it, must handle it on all sides, must feel whether the sting be taken out: he must examine 'whether he be in Christ;' that is, whether 'he be a new creature.' And indeed I do not so much wonder that any man fears to die, as when I see a careless and a wicked person descend to his grave with as much indifference as he goes to sleep; that is, with no other trouble than that he leaves the world, but he does not fear to die; and yet, upon the instant of his dissolution, he goes into the common receptacle of souls, where nothing can be addressed to him but the consequence of what he brings along with him, and he shall presently know whether he shall be saved or damned.

We have read of some men, who by reading or hearing strange opinions have entered into desperate melancholy, and divers who have perfectly despaired of the Divine mercy ; who feeling such horrid convulsions in their souls, such fearful expectations of an eternal curse, that not finding themselves able to bear so intolerable a fear, have hanged or drowned themselves ; and yet they only thought so, or feared it ; and might have altered it if they would have hoped and prayed : but let it be considered, when the soul is stripped of the cloud, her body ; when she is entered into strange regions, and converses only with spirits, and sees plainly all that is within her ; when all her sins appear in their own natural ugliness, and set out by their aggravating circumstances ; when she remembers her filthy pleasures, and hates them infinitely, as being such things to which she then can have no appetite ; when she perceives she shall perish for that which is not, for that whose remembrance is intolerable ; when she sees many new secrets which she understood not before, and hath stranger apprehensions of the wrath of God, than ever could be represented in this life ; when she hath the notices of a spirit, and an understanding pure enough to see essences, and rightly to weigh all the degrees of things ; when possibly, she is often affrighted with the alarms and conjectures of the day of judgment ; or if she be not, yet certainly knows not only by faith and fear, but by a clear light and proper knowledge, that it shall certainly come, and its effects shall remain for ever, then she hath time enough to bewail her own folly and remediless infelicity ; if we could now think seriously, that things must come to that pass, and place ourselves, by holy meditation, in the circumstances of that condition, and consider what we should then think,—how miserably deplore our folly, how comfortless remember our ill-gotten wealth ; with how much asperity and deep sighing we should call to mind our foolish pride, our trifling swearing, our beastly drinkings, our unreasonable and brutish lusts ; it could not be but we must grow wiser on a sudden, despise the world, betake ourselves to a strict religion, reject all vanities of spirit, and be sober and watch unto prayer. If any of us had but a strange dream, and should, in the fears of the night, but suppose ourselves in hell, and be affrighted with those circumstances of damnation which we can tell of, and use in our imperfect notices of things, it would effect strange changes upon a ductile and malleable spirit. A frequent, severe meditation can do more than a seldom and a fantastic dream ; but an active faith can do more than all the arts and contingencies of fancy or discourse.

Now it is well with us, and we may yet secure it shall be well with us for ever ; but within an hour it may be otherwise with any of us all, who do not instantly take courses of security. But he that does not, would, in such a change, soon come to wish, that he might exchange his state with the meanest, with the miserablest of all mankind ; with galley-slaves and miners, with men condemned to tortures for a good conscience.

In the day of felling timber, the shrub and the bramble are better than the tallest fir, or the goodliest cedar ; and a poor saint, whose soul is in the hand of Jesus, placed under the altar, over which our high priest, like the cherubim over the propitiatory, intercedes perpetually for the hastening of his glory, is better than the greatest tyrant, who, if he dies, is undone for ever. For, in the interval, there shall be rest and comfort to the one ; and torment, and amazement, and hellish confusion to the other ; and the day of judgment will come, and it shall appear to all the world, that

they whose joys were not in this world, were not, 'of all men, most miserable,' because their joys and their life were hid with Christ in God, and at the resurrection of the just, shall be brought forth, and be illustrious, beyond all the beauties of the world.

THE MORAL LAW AS EXPOUNDED BY NATURE, BY MOSES,
AND BY CHRIST.

BEING THE PREFACE TO THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY JESUS.

CHRISTIAN religion hath so many exterior advantages to its reputation and advancement, from the Author and from the Ministers, from the fountain of its origination and the channels of conveyance, (God being the Author, the Word Incarnate being the great Doctor and Preacher of it, his life and death being its consignation, the Holy Spirit being the great argument and demonstration of it, and the Apostles the organs and conduits of its dissemination,) that it were glorious beyond all opposition and disparagement, though we should not consider the excellency of its matter, and the certainty of its probation, and the efficacy of its power, and the perfection and rare accomplishment of its design. But I consider that Christianity is therefore very little understood, because it is reproached upon that pretence, which its very being and design does infinitely confute. It is esteemed to be a religion contrary in its principles or in its precepts to that wisdom, whereby the world is governed, and commonwealths increase, and greatness is acquired, and kings go to war, and our ends of interest are served and promoted; and that it is an institution so wholly in order to another world, that it does not at all communicate with this, neither in its end nor in its discourses, neither in the policy nor in the philosophy; and therefore, as the doctrine of the cross was entertained at first in scorn by the Greeks, in offence and indignation by the Jews, so is the whole system and collective body of Christian philosophy esteemed imprudent by the politics of the world, and flat and irrational by some men of excellent wit and sublime discourse; who, because the permissions and dictates of natural, true, and essential reason, are, at no hand, to be contradicted by any superinduced discipline, think that whatsoever seems contrary to their reason is also violent to our nature, and offers indeed a good to us, but by ways unnatural and unreasonable. And I think they are very great strangers to the present affairs and persuasions of the world, who know not that Christianity is very much undervalued upon this principle, men insensibly becoming unchristian, because they are persuaded, that much of the greatness of the world is contradicted by the religion. But certainly no mistake can be greater: for the holy Jesus by his doctrine did instruct the understandings of men, made their appetites more obedient, their reason better principled, and argumentative with less deception, their wills apter for noble choices, their governments more prudent, their present felicities greater, their hopes more excellent, and that duration, which was intended to them by their Creator, he made manifest to be a state of glory: and all this was to be done and obtained

respectively by the ways of reason and nature, such as God gave to man then, when at first he designed him to a noble and an immortal condition ; the Christian law being for the substance of it, nothing but the restitution and perfection of the law of nature. And this I shall represent in all the parts of its natural progression ; and I intend it not only as a preface to the following books, but for an introduction and invitation to the whole religion.

2. For God, when he made the first emanations of his eternal being, and created man as the end of all his productions here below, designed him to an end such as himself was pleased to choose for him, and gave him abilities proportionable to attain that end. God gave man a reasonable and an intelligent nature ; and to this noble nature he designed as noble an end ; he intended man should live well and happily, in proportion to his appetites, and in the reasonable doing and enjoying those good things, which God made him naturally to desire. For, since God gave him proper and peculiar appetites with proportion to their own objects, and gave him reason and abilities not only to perceive the sapidness and relish of those objects, but also to make reflex acts upon such perceptions, and to perceive that he did perceive, which was a rare instrument of pleasure and pain respectively ; it is but reasonable to think, that God who created him in mercy, did not only proportion a being to his nature, but did also provide satisfaction for all those appetites and desires, which himself had created and put into him. For, if he had not, then the being of a man had been nothing but a state of perpetual affliction, and the creation of men had been the greatest unmercifulness in the world ; disproportionate objects being mere instances of affliction, and those unsatisfied appetites nothing else but instruments of torment.

3. Therefore, that this intendment of God and nature should be effected, that is, that man should become happy, it is naturally necessary that all his regular appetites should have an object appointed them, in the fruition of which felicity must consist : because nothing is felicity but when what was reasonably or orderly desired is possessed ; for the having what is not desired, or the wanting of what we desired, or the desiring what we should not, are the several constituent parts of infelicity ; and it can have no other constitution.

4. Now the first appetite man had in order to his great end was, to be as perfect as he could, that is, to be as like the best thing he knew as his nature and condition would permit. And although by Adam's fancy and affection to his wife, and by God's appointing fruit for him, we see the lower appetites were first provided for ; yet the first appetite which man had, as he distinguishes from lower creatures, was to be like God, (for by that the devil tempted him ;) and in order to that he had naturally sufficient instruments and abilities. For although by being abused with the devil's sophistry he chose an incompetent instrument, yet because it is naturally certain, that love is the greatest assimilation of the object and the faculty, Adam by loving God might very well approach nearer him according as he could. And it was natural to Adam to love God, who was his Father, his Creator, the fountain of all good to him, and of excellency in himself ; and whatsoever is understood to be such, it is as natural for us to love, and we do it for the same reasons, for which we love any thing else ; and we cannot love for any other reason, but for one or both these in their proportion apprehended.

5. But because God is not only excellent and good, but by being supreme

Lord, hath power to give us what laws he pleases, obedience to his laws therefore becomes naturally, but consequently, necessary, when God decrees them ; because he does make himself an enemy to all rebels and disobedient sons, by affixing penalties to the transgressors : and therefore disobedience is naturally inconsistent, not only with love to ourselves, because it brings afflictions upon us, but with love to our supreme Lawgiver : it is contrary to the natural love we bear to God so understood, because it makes him our enemy, whom naturally and reasonably we cannot but love ; and therefore also opposite to the first appetite of man, which is to be like God, in order to which we have naturally no instrument but love, and the consequents of love.

6. From this first appetite of man to be like God, and the first natural instrument of it, love, descend all the first obligations of religion ; in which there are some parts more immediately and naturally expressive, others by superinduction and positive command. Natural religion I call such actions, which either are proper to the nature of the thing we worship, (such as are giving praises to him, and speaking excellent things of him, and praying to him for such things as we need, and a readiness to obey him in whatsoever he commands), or else such as are expressions proportionate to our natures that make them ; that is, giving to God the best things we have, and by which we can declare our esteem of his honour and excellency ; assigning some portion of our time, of our estate, the labours of our persons, the increase of our store, first fruits, sacrifices, oblations, and tithes ; which therefore God rewards, because he hath allowed to our natures no other instruments of doing him honour, but by giving to him in some manner, which we believe honourable and apt, the best thing we have.

7. The next appetite a man hath is to beget one like himself, God having implanted that appetite into man for the propagation of mankind, and given it as his first blessing and permission : “ It is not good for man to be alone ; ” and “ Increase and multiply.” He gave to man a woman for a wife, for the companion of his sorrows, for the instrument of multiplication ; and yet provided him but of one, and intimated he should have no more : which we do not only know by an after revelation, the holy Jesus having declared it to have been God’s purpose ; but Adam himself understood it, as appears by his first discourses at the entertainment of his new bride. And although there were permissions afterward of polygamy, yet there might have been a greater pretence of necessity at first, because of enlarging and multiplying fountains rather than channels ; and three or four at first would have enlarged mankind by greater proportion than many more afterwards ; little distances near the centre make greater and larger figures, than when they part near the fringes of the circle ; and therefore those after permissions were to avoid a greater evil, not a hallowing of the license, but a reproach of their infirmity. And certainly the multiplication of wives is contrariant to that design of love and endearment, which God intended at first between man and wife.

And amongst them that have many wives, the relation and necessitude is trifling and loose, and they are all equally contemptible ; because the mind entertains no loves or union where the object is multiplied, and the act unfixed and distracted. So that this having a great commodity in order to man’s great end, that is, of living well and happily, seems to be intended by God in the nature of things and instruments natural and reasonable towards man’s

end ; and therefore to be a law, if not natural, yet at least positive and superinduced at first, in order to man's proper end. However, by the provision which God made for satisfaction of this appetite of nature, all those actions, which deflect and err from the order of this end, are unnatural and inordinate, and not permitted by the concession of God, nor the order of the thing ; but such actions only, which naturally produce the end of this provision and satisfaction, are natural, regular, and good.

8. But by this means man grew into a society and a family, and having productions of his own kind, which he naturally desired, and therefore loved, he was consequently obliged to assist them in order to their end, that they might become like him, that is, perfect men, and brought up to the same state : and they also by being at first impotent, and for ever after beneficiaries and obliged persons, are for the present subject to their parents, and for ever after bound to duty ; because there is nothing which they can do, that can directly produce so great a benefit to the parents as they have to the children. From hence naturally descend all those mutual obligations between parents and children, which are instruments of protection and benefit on the one side, and duty and obedience on the other ; and all these to be expressed according as either of their necessities shall require, or any stipulation or contract shall appoint, or shall be superinduced by any positive laws of God or man.

9. In natural descent of the generations of man, this one first family was multiplied so much, that for conveniency they were forced to divide their dwellings ; and this they did by families especially, the great father being the major-domo to all his minors. And this division of dwellings, although it kept the same form and power in the several families, which were in the original, yet it introduced some new necessities, which although they varied in the instance, yet were to be determined by such instruments of reason, which were given to us at first upon foresight of the public necessities of the world. And when the families came to be divided, that their common parent being extinct, no master of a family had power over another master ; the rights of such men and their natural power became equal, because there was nothing to distinguish them, and because they might do equal injury, and invade each other's possessions, and disturb their peace, and surprise their liberty. And so also was their power of doing benefit equal, though not the same in kind. But God, who made man a sociable creature, because he knew it was "not good for him to be alone," so dispensed the abilities and possibilities of doing good, that in something or other every man might need or be benefited by every man. Therefore, that they might pursue the end of nature, and their own appetites of living well and happily, they were forced to consent to such contracts, which might secure and supply to every one those good things, without which he could not live happily. Both the appetites, the irascible and the concupiscible, fear of evil, and desire of benefit, were the sufficient endearments of contracts, of societies, and republics. And upon this stock were decreed and hallowed all those propositions, without which bodies politic and societies of men cannot be happy. And in the transaction of these, many accidents daily happening, it grew still reasonable, that is, necessary to the end of living happily, that all those after obligations should be observed with the proportion of the same faith and endearment which bound the first contracts. For though the natural law be always the same, yet some parts of it are primely necessary, others by suppo-

sition and accident; and both are of the same necessity, that is, equally necessary in the several cases. Thus to obey a king is as necessary and naturally reasonable as to obey a father, that is, supposing there be a king, as it is certain naturally a man cannot be, but a father must be supposed. If it be made necessary that I promise, it is also necessary that I perform it: for else I shall return to that inconvenience, which I sought to avoid when I made the promise; and though the instance be very far removed from the first necessities and accidents of our prime being and production, yet the reason still pursues us, and natural reason reaches up to the very last minutes, and orders the most remote particulars of our well-being.

10. Thus, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to kill, are very reasonable prosecutions of the great end of nature, of living well and happily; but when a man is said to steal, when to be a murderer, when to be incestuous, the natural law doth not teach in all cases; but when the superinduced constitution hath determined the particular law, by natural reason we are obliged to observe it: because, though the civil power makes the instance, and determines the particular; yet right reason makes the sanction, and passes the obligation. The law of nature makes the major proposition; but the civil constitution, or any superinduced law makes the assumption in a practical syllogism. To kill is not murder; but to kill such persons, whom I ought not. It was not murder, among the Jews, to kill a manslayer, before he entered a city of refuge; to kill the same man after his entry, was. Among the Romans, to kill an adulteress or a ravisher in the act, was lawful; with us, it is murder. Murder, and incest, and theft, always were unlawful; but the same actions were not always the same crimes. And it is just with these, as with disobedience, which was ever criminal; but the same thing was not estimated to be disobedience; nor indeed could any thing be so, till the sanction of a superior had given the instance of obedience. So for theft: to catch fish in rivers, or deer, or pigeons, when they were esteemed of a wild condition, and so taken for the first time was lawful; just as to take or kill badgers or foxes, and beavers and lions: but when the laws had appropriated rivers, and divided shores, and imparked deer, and housed pigeons, it became theft to take them without leave. To despoil the Egyptians was not theft, when God, who is the Lord of all possessions, had bidden the Israelites; but to do so now, were the breach of the natural law, and of a divine commandment. For the natural law, I said, is eternal in the sanction, but variable in the instance and the expression. And indeed the laws of nature are very few; they were but two at first, and but two at last, when the great change was made from families to kingdoms. The first is, to do duty to God; the second is, to do to ourselves and our neighbours, that is, to our neighbours as to ourselves, all those actions, which naturally, reasonably, or by institution or emergent necessity, are in order to a happy life. Our blessed Saviour reduces all the law to these two: 1. Love the Lord with all thy heart: 2. Love thy neighbour as thyself. In which I observe, in verification of my former discourse,* that love is the first natural bond of duty to God, and so also it is to our neighbour. And therefore all intercourse with our neighbour was founded in, and derived from the two greatest endearments of love in the world. A man came to have a neighbour, by being a husband and a father.

* Num. 4.

11. So that still there are but two great natural laws, binding us in our relations to God and man; we remaining essentially, and, by the very design of creation, obliged to God in all, and to our neighbours in the proportions of equality, as thyself; that is, that he be permitted and promoted, in the order to his living well and happily, as thou art: for love being there not an affection, but the duty that results from the first natural bands of love, which began neighbourhood, signifies justice, equality, and such reasonable proceedings, which are in order to our common end of a happy life; and is the same with that other, "Whatsoever ye would, that men should do to you, do you to them;" and that is certainly the greatest and most effective love; because it best promotes that excellent end, which God designed for our natural perfection. All other particulars are but prosecutions of these two, that is, of the order of nature: save only that there is a third law, which is a part of love too; it is self-love; and therefore is rather supposed, than at the first expressed, because a man is reasonably to be presumed to have in him a sufficient stock of self-love, to serve the ends of his nature and creation; and that is, that man demean and use his own body in that decorum, which is most orderly and proportionate to his perfective end of a happy life; which Christian religion calls sobriety; and it is a prohibition of those uncharitable, self-destroying sins of drunkenness, gluttony, and inordinate and unreasonable manners of lust, destructive of nature's intendments, or at least no ways promoting them. For it is naturally lawful to satisfy any of these desires, when the desire does not carry the satisfaction beyond the design of nature, that is, to the violation of health, or that happy living, which consists in observing those contracts, which mankind thought necessary to be made, in order to the same great end; unless where God hath superinduced a restraint, making an instance of sobriety to become an act of religion, or to pass into an expression of duty to him: but then it is not a natural, but a religious sobriety, and may be instanced in fasting or abstinence from such kinds of meat, or some times or manners of conjugation. These are the three natural laws, described in the Christian doctrine; that we live, 1. godly; 2. soberly; 3. righteously. And the particulars of the first are ordinarily to be determined by God immediately, or his vicegerents, and by reason observing and complying with the accidents of the world, and dispositions of things and persons; the second, by the natural order of nature, by sense, and by experience; and the third, by human contracts and civil laws.

12. The result of the preceding discourse is this. Man, who was designed by God to a happy life, was fitted with sufficient means to attain that end, so that he might, if he would, be happy; but he was a free agent, and so might choose. And it is possible, that man may fail of his end, and be made miserable, by God, by himself, or by his neighbour; or, by the same persons, he may be made happy in the same proportions, as they relate to him. If God be angry or disobeyed, he becomes our enemy, and so we fail: if our neighbour be injured or impeded in the direct order to his happy living, he hath equal right against us, as we against him, and so we fail that way: and if I be intemperate, I grow sick and worsted in some faculty, and so I am unhappy in myself. But if I obey God, and do right to my neighbour, and confine myself within the order and design of nature; I am secured in all ends of blessing, in which I can be assisted by these three, that is, by all my relatives; there being no end of man designed by

God in order to his happiness, to which these are not proper and sufficient instruments. Man can have no other relations, no other discourses, no other regular appetites, but what are served and satisfied by religion, by sobriety, and by justice. There is nothing, whereby we can relate to any person, who can hurt us, or do us benefit, but is provided for in these three. These, therefore, are all ; and these are sufficient.

13. But now it is to be inquired, how these become laws ; obliging us to sin, if we transgress, even before any positive law of God be superinduced : for else, how can it be a natural law, that is, a law obliging all nations and all persons, even such who have had no intercourse with God by way of special revelation, and have lost all memory of tradition ? For either such persons, whatsoever they do, shall obtain that end, which God designed for them in their nature, that is, a happy life according to the duration of an immortal nature ; or else they shall perish for prevaricating of these laws. And yet, if they were no laws to them, and decreed and made sacred by sanction, promulgation, and appendant penalties, they could not so oblige them, as to become the rule of virtue or vice.

14. When God gave us natural reason, that is, sufficient ability to do all that should be necessary to live well and happily, he also knew, that some appetites might be irregular, just as some stomachs would be sick, and some eyes blind ; and a man, being a voluntary agent, might choose an evil with as little reason, as the angels of darkness did, that is, they might do unreasonably, because they would do so ; and then a man's understanding should serve him but as an instrument of mischief, and his will carry him on to it with a blind and impotent desire ; and then the beauteous order of creatures would be discomposed by unreasonable, and unconsidering, or evil persons. And therefore it was most necessary, that man should have his appetites confined within the designs of nature, and the other to his end ; for a will, without the restraint of a superior power or a perfect understanding, is like a knife in a child's hand, as apt for mischief as for use. Therefore it pleased God to bind man, by the signature of laws, to observe those great natural reasons, without which man could not arrive at the great end of God's designing ; that is, he could not live well and happily. God, therefore, made it the first law to love him, and, which is all one, to worship him, to speak honour of him, and to express it in all our ways, the chief whereof is obedience. And this we find in the instance of that positive precept, which God gave to Adam, and which was nothing but a particular of the great general. But in this there is little scruple, because it is not imaginable, that God would, in any period of time, not take care, that himself be honoured, his glory being the very end why he made man ; and therefore it must be certain, that this did, at the very first, pass into a law.

15. But concerning this and other things, which are usually called natural laws, I consider, that the things themselves were such, that the doing them was therefore declared to be a law, because the not doing them did certainly bring a punishment proportionable to the crime, that is, a just deficiency from the end of creation, from a good and happy life : 2. and also a punishment of a guilty conscience : which I do not understand to be a fear of hell, or of any supervening penalty, unless the conscience be accidentally instructed into such fears by experience or revelation ; but it is a disease or evil of the reasonable faculty ; that, as there is a rare content in the discourses of reason, there is a satisfaction, an acquiescency, like that

of creatures in their proper place, and definite actions, and competent perfections ; so, in prevaricating the natural law, there is a dissatisfaction, a disease, a removing out of the place, an inquietness of spirit, even when there is no monitor or observer. It is naturally certain, that the cruelty of tyrants torments themselves, and is a hook in their nostrils, and a scourge to their spirits ; and the pungency of forbidden lust is truly a thorn in the flesh, full of anguish and secret vexation. And it is certain to us, and verified by the experience and observation of all wise nations, though not naturally demonstrable, that this secret punishment is sharpened and promoted in degrees by the hand of Heaven, the finger of the same hand that writ the law in our understandings.

16. But the prevarications of the natural law have also their portion of a special punishment, besides the scourge of an inquiet spirit. The man that disturbs his neighbour's rest, meets with disturbances himself : and since I have naturally no more power over my neighbour, than he hath over me (unless he descended naturally from me), he hath an equal privilege to defend himself, and to secure his quiet by disturbing the order of my happy living, as I do his. And this equal permission is certainly so great a sanction and signature of the law of justice, that, in the just proportion of my receding from the reasonable prosecution of my end, in the same proportion and degree my own infelicity is become certain ; and this in several degrees up to the loss of all, that is, of life itself : for where no farther duration or differing state is known, there death is ordinarily esteemed the greatest infelicity ; where something beyond it is known, there also it is known, that such prevarication makes that farther duration to be unhappy. So that an affront is naturally punished by an affront, the loss of a tooth with the loss of a tooth, of an eye with an eye, the violent taking away of another man's goods by the losing my own. For I am liable to as great an evil as I infer, and naturally he is not unjust, that inflicts it. And he that is drunk, is a fool or a madman for the time ; and that is his punishment, and declares the law and the sin : and so in proportions to the transgressions of sobriety. But when the first of the natural laws is violated, that is, God is disobeyed or dishonoured, or when the greatest of natural evils is done to our neighbour, then death became the penalty : to the first, in the first period of the world ; to the second, at the restitution of the world, that is, at the beginning of the second period. He that did attempt to kill, from the beginning of ages might have been resisted and killed, if the assaulted could not else be safe ; but he that killed actually, as Cain did, could not be killed himself, till the law was made in Noah's time ; because there was no person living, that had equal power on him, and had been naturally injured. While the thing was doing, the assailant and the assailed had equal power ; but when it was done, and one was killed, he that had the power or right of killing his murderer, is now dead, and his power is extinguished with the man. But after the flood, the power was put into the hand of some trusted person, who was to take the forfeiture. And thus, I conceive these natural reasons, in order to their proper end, became laws, and bound fast by the band of annexed and consequent penalties.

17. And thus death was brought into the world ; not by every prevarication of any of the laws, by any instance of unreasonableness : for in proportion to the evil of the action would be the evil of the suffering, which in all cases would not arrive at death ; as every injury, every intemperance,

should not have been capital. But some things were made evil by a superinduced prohibition, as eating one kind of fruit; some things were evil by inordination: the first was morally evil, the second was evil naturally. Now the first sort brought in death by a prime sanction; the second, by degrees and variety of accident. For every disobedience, and transgression of that law, which God made as the instance of our doing him honour and obedience, is an integral violation of all the band between him and us: it does not grow in degrees, according to the instance and subject matter; for it is as great a disobedience to eat, when he hath forbidden us, as to offer to climb to heaven with an ambitious tower. And therefore it is but reasonable for us to fear, and just in him to make us at once suffer death, which is the greatest of natural evils, for disobeying him: to which death we may arrive by degrees, in doing actions against the reasonableness of sobriety and justice, but cannot arrive by degrees of disobedience to God, or irreligion; because every such act deserves the worst of things, but the other naturally deserves no greater evil than the proportion of their own inordination, till God, by a superinduced law, hath made them also to become acts of disobedience as well as inordination, that is, morally evil, as well as naturally: for "by the law," saith St Paul, "sin became exceedingly sinful,"* that is, had a new degree of obliquity added to it. But this was not at first. For therefore saith St Paul, "Before," or "until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed, when there is no law;"† meaning, that those sins, which were forbidden by Moses's law, were actually in the manners of men and the customs of the world; but they were not imputed, that is, to such personal punishments and consequent evils, which afterwards those sins did introduce; because those sins, which were only evil by inordination, and discomposure of the order of man's end of living happily, were made unlawful upon no other stock, but that God would have man to live happily; and therefore gave him reason, to effect that end; and if a man became unreasonable, and did things contrary to his end, it was impossible for him to be happy; that is, he should be miserable in proportion. But in that degree and manner of evil they were imputed; and that was sanction enough to raise natural reason up to the constitution of a law.

18. Thirdly, the law of nature, being thus decreed and made obligatory, was a sufficient instrument of making man happy, that is, in producing the end of his creation. But as Adam had evil discourses and irregular appetites, before he fell (for they had made him fall,) and as the angels, who had no original sin, yet they chose evil at the first, when it was wholly arbitrary in them to do so or otherwise; so did man. "God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions." Some men were ambitious, and by incompetent means would make their brethren to be their servants; some were covetous, and would usurp that, which, by an earlier distinction, had passed into private possession: and then they made new principles, and new discourses, such which were reasonable in order to their private indirect ends, but not to the public benefit, and therefore would prove unreasonable and mischievous to themselves at last.

19. And when once they broke the order of creation, it is easy to understand, by what necessities of consequence they ran into many sins and irrational proceedings. Ælian tells of a nation, who had a law binding them to

* Rom. vii. 13.

† Rom. v. 13.

beat their parents to death with clubs, when they lived to a decrepit and unprofitable age. By a law of the Venetians, says Bodinus, a son in banishment was redeemed from the sentence, if he killed his banished father. And in Homer's time, there were a sort of pirates, who professed robbing, and did account it honourable. But the great prevarications of the laws of nature were in the first commandment; when the tradition concerning God was derived by a long line, and there were no visible remonstrances of an extraordinary power, they were quickly brought to believe, that he whom they saw not, was not at all, especially being prompted to it by pride, tyranny, and a loose imperious spirit. Others fell to low opinions concerning God, and made such as they listed of their own; and they were like to be strange gods, which were of man's making. When man, either maliciously or carelessly, became unreasonable in the things that concerned God, God was pleased to "give him over to a reprobate mind,"* that is, an unreasonable understanding, and false principles concerning himself and his neighbour, that his sin against the natural law might become its own punishment by discomposing his natural happiness. Atheism and idolatry brought in all unnatural lusts, and many unreasonable injustices. And this we learn from St Paul: "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things, which are not convenient;"† that is, incongruities towards the end of their creation; and so they became "full of unrighteousness, lust, covetousness, malice, envy, strife, and murder, disobedient to parents, breakers of covenants, unnatural in their affections," and in their passions: and all this was the consequent of breaking the first natural law. "They changed the truth of God into a lie: for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections."‡

20. Now God, who takes more care for the good of man, than man does for his own, did not only imprint these laws in the hearts and understandings of man, but did also take care to make this light shine clear enough to walk by, by adopting some instances of the natural laws into religion. Thus the law against murder became a part of religion in the time of Noah; and some other things were then added concerning worshipping God, against idolatry, and against unnatural and impure mixtures. Sometimes God super-added judgments, as to the 23,000 Assyrians for fornication. For although these punishments were not threatened to the crime in the sanction and expression of any definite law, and it could not naturally arrive to it by its inordination; yet it was as agreeable to the Divine justice to inflict it, as to inflict the pains of hell upon evil livers, who yet had not any revelation of such intolerable danger: for it was sufficient, that God had made such crimes to be against their very nature: and they who will do violence to their nature, to do themselves hurt, and to displease God, deserve to lose the title to all those good things, which God was pleased to design for man's final condition. And because it grew habitual, customary, and of innocent reputation, it pleased God to call this precept out of the darkness, whither their evil customs and false discourses had put it; and by such an extraordinary, but very signal punishment, to remind them, that the natural permissions of concubinate were only confined to the ends of mankind, and were hallowed only by the faith and the design of marriage. And this was

* Rom. i. 25, 26, &c.

† Ver. 28, &c.

‡ Ver. 25, 26.

signified by St Paul, in these words: "They that sin without the law, shall also perish without the law;"* that is, by such judgments, which God hath inflicted on evil livers in several periods of the world, irregularly indeed, not signified in kind, but yet sent into the world with designs of a great mercy; that the ignorances, and prevarications, and partial abolitions of the natural law, might be cured and restored, and by the dispersion of prejudices the state of natural reason be redintegrate.

21. Whatsoever was besides this, was accidental and emergent; such as were the discourses of wise men, which God raised up in several countries and ages, as Job, and Eliphaz, and Bildad, and those of the families of the patriarchs dispersed into several countries; and constant tradition in some noble and more eminent descents. And yet all this was so little and imperfect, not in itself, but in respect of the thick cloud man had drawn before his understanding, that darkness covered the face of the earth in a great proportion. Almost all the world were idolaters; and when they had broken the first of the natural laws, the breach of the other was not only naturally consequent, but also, by Divine judgment, it descended infallibly. And yet God, pitying mankind, did not only still continue the former remedies, and added blessings, "giving them fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness," so leaving the nations without excuse; but also made a very noble change in the world: for having chosen an excellent family, the fathers of which lived exactly according to the natural law, and with observation of those few superadded precepts, in which God did specify their prime duty, having swelled that family to a great nation, and given them possession of an excellent land, which God took from seven nations, because they were egregious violators of the natural law, he was pleased to make a very great restitution and declaration of the natural law, in many instances of religion and justice, which he framed into positive precepts, and adopted them into the family of the first original instances, making them as necessary in the particulars, as they were in the primary obligation; but the instances were such, whereof some did relate only to the present constitution of the commonwealth; others to such universal contracts, which obliged all the world, by reason of the equal necessity of all mankind to admit them. And these himself writ on tables of stone, and dressed up their nation into a body politic by an excellent system of politic laws, and adorned it with a rare religion, and left this nation as a piece of leaven in a mass of dough, not only to do honour to God, and happiness to themselves, by those instruments, which he had now very much explicated, but also to transmit the same reasonable propositions into other nations: and he therefore multiplied them to a great necessity of a dispersion, that they might serve the ends of God and of the natural law, by their ambulatory life and their numerous disseminations. And this was it, which St Paul affirms, "The law was added because of transgression:"† meaning, that because men did transgress the natural, God brought Moses's law into the world, to be as a strand to the inundation of impiety. And thus the world stood, till the fulness of time was come: for so we are taught by the Apostle, "The law was added because of transgression;" but the date of this was to expire at a certain period, it was added to serve but "till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made."

* Rom. ii. 12.

† Gal. iii. 19.

22. For, because Moses's law was but an imperfect explication of the natural ; there being divers parts of the three laws of nature not at all explicated by that covenant, not the religion of prayers, not the reasonableness of temperance and sobriety in opinion and diet ; and in the more noble instances of humanity and doing benefit, it was so short, that, as St Paul says, "The law could not make the comers thereunto perfect ;" and, which was most of all considerable, it was confined to a nation ; and the other parts of mankind had made so little use of the records of that nation, that all the world was placed "in darkness, and sate in the shadow of death : " therefore it was, that in great mercy God sent his Son, "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel : " to instruct those, and consummate these ; that the imperfection of the one, and the mere darkness of the other, might be illustrated by the Sun of Righteousness. And this was by restoring the light of nature, which they by evil customs, and false principles, and evil laws, had obscured ; by restoring man to the liberty of his spirit, by freeing him from the slavery of sin, under which they were so lost and oppressed, that all their discourses and conclusions, some of their moral philosophy, and all their habitual practices, were but servants of sin, and made to co-operate to that end, not which God intended as perfective of human nature, but which the devil and vicious persons superinduced, to serve little ends and irregular, and to destroy the greater.

23. For certain it is, Christianity is nothing else but the most perfect design that ever was, to make a man be happy in his whole capacity : and as the law was to the Jews, so was philosophy to the Gentiles, a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, to teach them the rudiments of happiness, and the first and lowest things of reason ; that when Christ was come, all mankind might become perfect ; that is, be made regular in their appetites, wise in their understandings, assisted in their duties, directed to, and instructed in, their great ends. And this is that which the Apostle calls "being perfect men in Christ Jesus ;" perfect in all the intendments of nature, and in all the designs of God. And this was brought to pass by discovering, and restoring, and improving the law of nature, and by turning it all into religion.

24. For the natural law being a sufficient and a proportionate instrument and means to bring a man to the end designed in his creation, and this law being eternal and unalterable, (for it ought to be as lasting and as unchangeable as the nature itself, so long as it was capable of a law,) it was not imaginable, that the body of any law should make a new morality, new rules and general proportions, either of justice, or religion, or temperance, or felicity ; the essential parts of all these consisting in natural proportions, and means toward the consummation of man's last end, which was first intended, and is always the same. It is, as if there were a new truth in an essential and a necessary proposition. For although the instances may vary, there can be no new justice, no new temperance, no new relations, proper and natural relations and intercourses between God and us ; but what always were in praises and prayers, in adoration and honour, and in the symbolical expressions of God's glory and our needs.

25. Hence it comes, that that which is the most obvious and notorious appellation of the law of nature, that it is "a law written in our hearts," was also recounted as one of the glories and excellencies of Christianity. Plutarch, saying that "Kings ought to be governed by laws," explains him-

self, that this law must be “a word, not written in books and tables, but dwelling in the mind, a living rule, the interior guide of their manners, and monitor of their life.” And this was the same which St Paul expresses to be the guide of the Gentiles, that is, of all men naturally. “The Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law ; which shows the work of the law written in their hearts.”* And that we may see it was the law of nature, that returned in the sanctions of Christianity, God declares that, in the constitution of this law, he could take no other course than at first, that is, he would write them in the hearts of men : indeed with a new style, with a quill taken from the wings of the holy Dove ; the Spirit of God was to be the great engraver and the scribe of the new covenant, but the hearts of men should be the tables. “For this is the covenant, that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their hearts, and into their minds will I write them : and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more :”† that is, I will provide a means to expiate all the iniquities of man, and restore him to the condition of his first creation, putting him into the same order towards felicity, which I first designed to him, and that also by the same instruments. Now I consider, that the Spirit of God took very great care, that all the records of the law of Jesus should be carefully kept and transmitted to posterity in books and sermons, which, being an act of providence and mercy, was a provision, lest they should be lost or mistaken, as they were formerly, when God writ some of them in tables of stone for the use of the sons of Israel, and all of them in the first tables of nature with the finger of creation, as now he did in the new creature, by the finger of the Spirit. But then writing them in the tables of our minds besides the other, can mean nothing but placing them there, where they were before, and from whence we blotted them by the mixtures of impure principles and discourses. But I descend to particular and more minute considerations.

26. The laws of nature either are bands of religion, justice, or sobriety. Now I consider concerning religion, that whenever God hath made any particular precepts to a family, as to Abraham’s ; or to a single person, as to the man of Judah prophesying against the altar of Bethel ; or to a nation, as to the Jews at Sinai ; or to all mankind, as to the world descending from Noah ; it was nothing else but a trial or an instance of our obedience, a particular prosecution of the law of nature, whereby we are obliged to do honour to God, which was to be done by such expressions, which are natural intercourses between God and us, or such as he hath made to be so. Now in Christianity we are wholly left to that manner of prosecuting this first natural law, which is natural and proportionable to the nature of the thing, which the holy Jesus calls “worshipping God in spirit and truth :” in spirit, that is, with our souls heartily and devoutly, so as to exclude hypocrisy and indifferency ; and in truth, that is, without a lie, without vain imaginations and fantastic resemblances of him, which were introduced by the evil customs of the Gentiles, and without such false guises and absurd indecencies, which, as they are contrary to man’s reason, so are they contrary to the glory and reputation of God ; such as was that universal custom of all nations, of sacrificing in man’s blood, and offering festival-lusts and impurities in the solemnities of their religion ; for these being against

* Rom. ii. 14.

† Heb. x. 16, 17.

the purpose and design of God, and against right reason, are a lie, and enemies to the truth of a natural and proper religion. The holy Jesus only commanded us to pray often, and to praise God, to speak honour of his name, not to use it lightly, and vainly to believe him, to revere the instruments and ministers of religion, to ask for what we need, to put our trust in God, to worship him, to obey him, and to love him; for all these are but the expressions of love. And this is all Christ spake concerning the first natural law, the law of religion. For concerning the ceremonies or sacraments, which he instituted, they are but few, and they become matter of duty but by accident; as being instruments and rites of consigning those effects and mercies, which God sent to the world by the means of this law, and relate rather to the contract and stipulation, which Christ made for us, than to the natural order between duty and felicity.

27. Now all these are nothing but what we are taught by natural reason, that is, what God enabled us to understand, to be fit instruments of intercourse between God and us, and what was practised and taught by sober men in all ages and all nations, whose records we have received. For to make these appear certainly and naturally necessary, there was no more requisite, but that man should know there was a God, that is, an eternal Being, which gave him all that he had or was; and to know what himself was, that is, indigent and necessitous of himself, needing help of all the creatures, exposed to accidents and calamity, and defensible no ways but by the same hand that made him; creation and conversation, in the philosophy of all the world, being but the same act, continuing and flowing on him from an instant to duration, as a line from its mathematical point. And for this God took sufficient care; for he conversed with man, in the very first, in such clear, and certain, and perceptible transaction, that a man could as certainly know that God was, as that man was. And in all ages of the world he hath not left himself without witness, but gave such testimonies of himself that were sufficient; for they did actually persuade all nations, barbarous and civil, into the belief of a God. And it is but a nicety to consider, whether or no that proposition can be naturally demonstrated. For it was sufficient to all God's purposes and to all man's, that the proposition was actually believed; the instances were therefore sufficient to make faith because they did it. And a man may remove himself so far from all the degrees of aptness to believe a proposition, that nothing shall make them join. For if there were a sect of witty men, that durst not believe their senses, because they thought them fallible, it is no wonder, if some men should think every reason reprobable. But in such cases demonstration is a relative term, and signifies every probation, greater or lesser, which does actually make faith in any proposition; and in this God hath never been deficient, but hath to all men, that believe him, given sufficient to confirm them; to those few, that believed not, sufficient to reprove them.

28. Now in all these actions of religion, which are naturally consequent to this belief, there is no scruple, but in the instance of faith, which is presented to be an infused grace, an immission from God, and that for its object it hath principles supernatural, that is, naturally incredible; and therefore faith is supposed a grace above the greatest strength of reason. But in this I consider, that, if we look into all the sermons of Christ, we shall not easily find any doctrine that, in any sense, troubles natural philosophy,

but only that of the resurrection : (for I do not think those mystical expressions of plain truths, such as are, "being born again, eating the flesh of the Son of Man, being in the Father, and the Father in him," to be exceptions in this assertion.) And although some Gentiles did believe and deliver that article, and particularly Chrysippus, and the Thracians, (as Mela and Solinus report of them ;) yet they could not naturally discourse themselves into it, but had it from the imperfect report and opinion of some Jews that dwelt among them : and it was certainly a revelation or a proposition sent into the world by God. But then the believing it is so far from being above or against nature, that there is nothing in the world more reasonable, than to believe any thing which God tells us, or which is told us by a man sent from God, with mighty demonstration of his power and veracity. Naturally our bodies cannot rise, that is, there is no natural agent or natural cause sufficient to produce that effect ; but this is an effect of a Divine power : and he hath but a little stock of natural reason, who cannot conclude, that the same power, which made us out of nothing, can also restore us to the same condition, as well and easily, from dust and ashes certainly, as from mere nothing. And in this, and in all the like cases, faith is a submission of the understanding to the word of God, and is nothing else but a confessing, that God is truth, and that he is omnipotent ; that is, he can do what he will, and he will, when he hath once said it. And we are now as ignorant of the essence and nature of forms, and of that, which substantially distinguishes man from man, or an angel from an angel, as we were of the greatest article of our religion, before it was revealed ; and we shall remain ignorant for ever of many natural things, unless they be revealed ; and unless we knew all the secrets of philosophy, the mysteries of nature, and the rules and propositions of all things and all creatures, we are fools, if we say, that which we call an article of faith, I mean, truly such, is against natural reason. It may be indeed as much against our natural reasonings, as those reasonings are against truth. But if we remember, how great an ignorance dwells upon us all, it will be found the most reasonable thing in the world only to inquire, whether God hath revealed any such proposition ; and then not to say, It is against natural reason, and therefore an article of faith ; but I am told a truth, which I knew not till now, and so my reason is become instructed into a new proposition. And although Christ hath given us no new moral precepts, but such which were essentially and naturally reasonable, in order to the end of man's creation ; yet we may easily suppose him to teach us many a new truth, which we knew not, and to explicate to us many particulars of that estate, which God designed for man in his first production, but yet did not then declare to him ; and to furnish him with new revelations, and to signify the greatness of the designed end, to become so many arguments of endearment to secure his duty, that is, indeed, to secure his happiness by the infallible using the instruments of attaining it.

29. This is all I am to say concerning the precepts of religion Jesus taught us : he took off those many superinduced rites, which God enjoined to the Jews, and reduced us to the natural religion ; that is, to such expressions of duty, which all wise men and nations used ; save only, that he took away the rite of sacrificing beasts, because it was now determined in the great sacrifice of himself, which sufficiently and eternally reconciled all the world to God. All the other things, as prayers, and adoration, and

eucharist, and faith in God, are of a natural order and an unalterable expression : and, in the nature of the thing, there is no other way of address to God than these, no other expression of his glories and our needs ; both which must for ever be signified.

30. Secondly ; concerning the second natural precept, the Christian religion hath also added nothing beyond the first obligation, but explained it all : “ Whatsoever ye would men should do to you, do ye so to them ; ” that is the eternal rule of justice ; and that binds contracts, keeps promises, affirms truth, makes subjects obedient, and princes just ; it gives security to marts and banks, and introduces an equality of condition upon all the world, save only where an inequality is necessary, that is, in the relations of government, for the preservation of the common rights of equal titles and possessions, that there be some common term endued with power, who is to be the father of all men by an equal provision, that every man’s rights be secured by that fear, which naturally we shall bear to him, who can, and will, punish all unreasonable and unjust violations of property. And concerning this also, the holy Jesus hath added an express precept of paying tribute, and all Cæsar’s dues, to Cæsar : in all other particulars, it is necessary, that the instances and minutes of justice be appointed by the laws and customs of the several kingdoms and republics. And therefore it was, that Christianity so well combined with the government of heathen princes ; because, whatsoever was naturally just, or declared so by the political power, their religion bound them to observe, making obedience to be a double duty, a duty both of justice and religion : and the societies of Christians growing up from conventicles to assemblies, from assemblies to societies, introduced no change in the government ; but by little and little turned the commonwealth into a church, till the world being Christian, and justice also being religion, obedience to princes, observation of laws, honesty in contracts, faithfulness in promises, gratitude to benefactors, simplicity in discourse, and ingenuity in all pretences and transactions, became the characterisms of Christian men, and the word of a Christian the greatest solemnity of stipulation in the world.

31. But concerning the general, I consider, that in two very great instances, it was demonstrated, that Christianity was the greatest prosecution of natural justice and equality in the whole world. The one was in an election of an apostle into the place of Judas : when there were two equal candidates of the same pretension and capacity, the question was determined by lots, which naturally was the arbitration in questions whose parts were wholly indifferent ; and as it was used in all times, so it is to this day used with us in many places, where, lest there be a disagreement concerning the manner of tithing some creatures, and to prevent unequal arts and unjust practices, they are tithed by lot, and their fortuitous passing through the door of their fold. The other is in the cenobitic life of the first Christians and apostles : they had all things in common, which was that state of nature, in which men lived charitably and without injustice, before the distinction of dominions and private rights. But from this manner of life they were soon driven, by the public necessity and constitution of affairs.

32. Thirdly ; whatsoever else is in the Christian law, concerns the natural precept of sobriety, in which there is some variety and some difficulty. In the matter of carnality, the holy Jesus did clearly reduce us to the first institution of marriage in Paradise, allowing no other mixture, but what was

first intended in the creation and first sacramental union: and in the instance he so permitted us to the natural law, that he was pleased to mention no instance of forbidden lust, but in general and comprehensive terms of adultery and fornication: in the other, which are still more unnatural, as their names are concealed and hidden in shame and secrecy, we are to have no instructor but the modesty and order of nature.

33. As an instance of this law of sobriety, Christ superadded the whole doctrine of humility, which Moses did not, and which seemed almost to be extinguished in the world; and it is called by St Paul, the reasonableness or wisdom of sobriety. And it is all the reason in the world, that a man should think of himself but just as he is. He is deceived that thinks otherwise, and is a fool. And when we consider, that pride makes wars, and causes affronts, and no man loves a proud man, and he loves no man but himself and his flatterers, we shall understand, that the precept of humility is an excellent art, and a happy instrument towards human felicity. And it is no way contradicted by a natural desire of honour; it only appoints just and reasonable ways of obtaining it. We are not forbidden to receive honour; but to seek it for designs of pride and complacency, or to make it rest in our hearts. But when virtue receives the honour, and transmits it to God from our own head, the desires of nature are sufficiently satisfied, and nothing of religion contradicted. And it is certain, by all the experience of the world, that in every state and order of men, he that is humblest in proportion to that state, is (if all things else be symbolical) the most honoured person. For it is very observable, that when God designed man to a good and happy life, as the natural end of his creation, to verify this, God was pleased to give him objects sufficient and apt to satisfy every appetite; to satisfy it naturally, not to satisfy those extravagances which might be accidental, and procured by the irregularity of will or understanding; not to answer him in all that his desires could extend to, but satisfy the necessity of the appetites; all the desires that God made, not all that man should make. For we see, even in those appetites which are common to men and beasts, all the needs of nature, and all the ends of creation served, by the taking such proportions of their objects as are ordinate to their end, and which in man we call temperance, not as much as they naturally can; such as are mixtures of sexes merely for production of their kind, eating and drinking for needs and hunger. And yet God permitted our appetites to be able to extend beyond the limits of the mere natural design, that God, by restraining them, and putting the fetters of laws upon them, might turn natural desires into sobriety, and sobriety into religion, they becoming servants of the commandment. Now we must not call all those swellings of appetites natural inclination, nor the satisfaction of such tumours and excrescences any part of natural felicities: but that, which does just co-operate to those ends, which perfect human nature in order to its proper end. For the appetites of meat, and drink, and pleasures, are but intermedial and instrumental to the end, and not made for themselves, but first for the end, and then to serve God in the instances of obedience. Just so is the natural desire of honour intended to be a spur to virtue, (for to virtue only it is naturally consequent, or to natural and political superiority :) but to desire it beyond, or besides, the limit, is the swelling and the disease of the desire. And we can take no rule for its perfect value, but by the strict limits of the natural end or the superinduced end of religion in positive restraints.

34. According to this discourse we may best understand, that even the severest precepts of the Christian law are very consonant to nature and the first laws of mankind. Such is the precept of self-denial, which is nothing else but a confining the appetites within the limits of nature: for there they are permitted, (except when some greater purpose is to be served than the present answering the particular desire,) and whatsoever is beyond it, is not in the natural order to felicity; it is no better than an itch, which must be scratched and satisfied, but it is unnatural. But, for martyrdom itself, quitting our goods, losing lands, or any temporal interest, they are now become as reasonable in the present constitution of the world, as taking unpleasant potions, and suffering a member to be cauterized in sickness or disease. And we see, that death is naturally a less evil than a continual torment, and by some not so resented as a great disgrace; and some persons have chosen it for sanctuary and remedy: and therefore, much rather shall it be accounted prudent and reasonable, and agreeable to the most perfect desires of nature, to exchange a house for a hundred, a friend for a patron, a short affliction for a lasting joy, and a temporal death for an eternal life. For so the question is stated to us by Him that understands it best. True it is, that the suffering of losses, afflictions, and death, is naturally an evil, and therefore no part of a natural precept, or prime injunction. But when God having commanded instances of religion, man will not suffer us to obey God, or will not suffer us to live, then the question is, Which is most agreeable to the most perfect and reasonable desires of nature, to obey God or to obey man; to fear God, or to fear man; to preserve our bodies, or to preserve our souls; to secure a few years of uncertain and troublesome duration, or an eternity of a very glorious condition? Some men, reasonably enough, choose to die for considerations lower than that of a happy eternity; therefore death is not such an evil, but that it may, in some cases, be desired and reasonably chosen, and in some be recompensed at the highest rate of a natural value: and if by accident we happen into an estate, in which of necessity one evil or another must be suffered, certainly nothing is more naturally reasonable and eligible than to choose the least evil; and when there are two good things propounded to our choice, both which cannot be possessed, nothing is more certainly the object of a prudent choice than the greater good. And therefore, when once we understand the question of suffering, and self-denial, and martyrdom to this sense, as all Christians do, and all wise men do, and all sects do in their several persuasions, it is but remembering, that to live happily hereafter is more intended to us by God, and is more perfective of human nature, than to live here with all the prosperity which this state affords; and it will evidently follow, that when violent men will not let us enter into that condition by the ways of nature and prime intentment, that is, of natural religion, justice, and sobriety, it is made, in that case, and upon that supposition, certainly, naturally, and infallibly reasonable, to secure the perfective and principal design of our felicity, though it be by such instruments, which are as unpleasant to our senses, as are the instruments of our restitution to health; since both one and the other, in the present conjunction and state of affairs, are most proportionable to reason, because they are so to the present necessity; not primarily intended to us by God, but superinduced by evil accidents and the violence of men. And we not only find, that Socrates suffered death in attestation of a God, though he flattered and discoursed himself into

the belief of an immortal reward ; but we also find, that all men that believed the immortality of the soul firmly and unmovably, made no scruple of exchanging their life, for the preservation of virtue, with the interest of their great hope, for honour sometimes, and oftentimes for their country.

35. Thus the holy Jesus perfected and restored the natural law, and drew it into a system of propositions, and made them to become of the family of religion. For God is so zealous to have man attain to the end to which he first designed him, that those things, which he hath put in the natural order to attain that end, he hath bound fast upon us, not only by the order of things, by which it was, that he that prevaricated, did naturally fall short of felicity, but also by bands of religion ; he hath now made himself a party and an enemy to those that will not be happy. Of old, religion was but one of the natural laws, and the instances of religion were distinct from the discourses of philosophy. Now, all the law of nature is adopted into religion, and by our love and duty to God we are tied to do all that is reason ; and the parts of our religion are but pursuances of the natural relation between God and us : and beyond all this, our natural condition is, in all senses improved by the consequents and adherences of this religion. For although nature and grace are opposite, that is, nature depraved by evil habits, by ignorance and ungodly customs, is contrary to grace, that is, to nature restored by the gospel, engaged to regular living by new revelations, and assisted by the Spirit ; yet it is observable, that the law of nature and the law of grace are never opposed. “ There is a law of our members,” saith St Paul ; that is, an evil necessity introduced into our appetites, by perpetual evil customs, examples, and traditions of vanity ; and there is a law of sin, that answers to this : and they differ only as inclination and habit, vicious desires and vicious practices. But then contrary to these are, first, “ a law of my mind,” which is the law of nature and right reason, and then the law of grace, that is, of Jesus Christ, who perfected and restored the first law, and by assistances reduced it into a law of holy living : and these two differ as the other ; the one is in order to the other, as imperfection and growing degrees and capacities are to perfection and consummation. The law of the mind had been so razed and obliterate, and we, by some means or other, so disabled from observing it exactly, that until it was turned into the law of grace, (which is a law of pardoning infirmities, and assisting us in our choices and elections,) we were in a state of deficiency from the perfective state of man, to which God intended us.

36. Now, although God always designed man to the same state, which he hath now revealed by Jesus Christ, yet he told him not of it ; and his permissions and licenses were then greater, and the law itself lay closer folded up in the compact body of necessary propositions, in order to so much of his end as was known, or could be supposed. But now, according to the extension of the revelation, the law itself is made wider, that is, more explicit ; and natural reason is thrust forward into discourses of charity and benefit, and we tied to do very much good to others, and tied to co-operate to each other's felicity.

37. That the law of charity is a law of nature, needs no other argument but the consideration of the first constitution of man. The first instances of justice or intercourse of man with a second or third person, were to such persons, towards whom he had the greatest endearments of affection in the world, a wife and children ; and justice and charity, at first was the

same thing. And it hath obtained in ages far removed from the first, that charity is called righteousness: "He hath dispersed and given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever."* And it is certain, Adam could not in any instance be unjust, but he must in the same also be uncharitable; the band of his first justice being the ties of love, and all having commenced in love. And our blessed Lord, restoring all to the intention of the first perfection, expresses it to the same sense, as I formerly observed; justice to our neighbour is loving him as ourselves. For, since justice obliges us to do, as we would be done to, as the irascible faculty restrains us from doing evil for fear of receiving evil, so the concupiscible obliges us to charity, that ourselves may receive good.

38. I shall say nothing concerning the reasonableness of this precept, but that it concurs rarely with the first reasonable appetite of man, of being like God. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," said our blessed Saviour: and therefore the commandment of charity, in all its parts, is a design not only to reconcile the most miserable person to some participations and sense of felicity, but to make the charitable man happy; and whether this be not very agreeable to the desires of an intelligent nature, needs no farther inquiry. And Aristotle, asking the question, Whether a man had most need of friends in prosperity or adversity? makes the case equal: "When they are in want they need assistance; when they are prosperous, they need partners of their felicity, that, by communicating their joy to them, it may reflect and double upon their spirits." And certain it is, there is no greater felicity in the world, than in the content that results from the emanations of charity. And this is that which St John calls "the old commandment," and "the new commandment." It was of old, for it was from the beginning, even in nature, and to the offices of which our very bodies had an organ and a seat; for therefore nature gave to a man bowels and the passion of yearning; but it grew up into religion by parts, and was made perfect, and in that degree, appropriate to the law of Jesus Christ. For so the holy Jesus became our lawgiver, and added many new precepts over and above what were in the law of Moses, but not more than was in the law of nature. The reason of both is, what I have all this while discoursed of: Christ made a more perfect restitution of the law of nature than Moses did, and so it became the second Adam to consummate that, which began to be less perfect, from the prevarication of the first Adam.

39. A particular of the precept of charity is forgiving injuries; and besides that it hath many superinduced benefits by way of blessing and reward, it relies also upon this natural reason, that a pure and a simple revenge does no way restore man towards the felicity, which the injury did interrupt. For revenge is a doing a simple evil, and does not, in its formality, imply reparation; for the mere repeating of our own right is permitted to them, that will do it by charitable instruments; and to secure myself or the public against the future, by positive inflictions upon the injurious, (if I be not judge myself,) is also within the moderation of an unblamable defence, (unless some accidents or circumstances vary the case;) but forgiving injuries is a separating the malice from the wrong, the transient act from the permanent effect; and it is certain, the act which is passed, cannot be rescinded; the effect may; and if it cannot, it does no way alleviate the evil

* Psalm cxii. 9.

of the accident, that I draw him that caused it, into as great a misery : since every evil happening in the world, is the proper object of pity, which is in some sense afflictive ; and therefore, unless we become unnatural and without bowels, it is most unreasonable, that we should increase our own afflictions by introducing a new misery, and making a new object of pity. All the ends of human felicity are secured without revenge, for without it we are permitted to restore ourselves ; and therefore it is against natural reason to do any evil that no way co-operates towards the proper and perfective end of human nature. And he is a miserable person, whose good is the evil of his neighbour ; and he, that revenges, in many cases, does worse than he that did the injury ; in all cases, as bad. For if the first injury was an injustice to serve an end of an advantage and real benefit ; then my revenge which is abstracted, and of a consideration separate and distinct from the reparation, is worse ; for I do him evil, without doing myself any real good ; which he did not, for he received advantage by it. But if the first injury was matter of mere malice without advantage, yet it is no worse than revenge, for that is just so ; and there is as much fantastic pleasure in doing a spite, as in doing revenge : they are both but like the pleasures of eating coals, and toads, and vipers. And certain it is, if a man, upon his private stock, could be permitted to revenge, the evil would be immortal. And it is rarely well discoursed by Tyndarus in Euripides : “ If the angry wife shall kill her husband, the son shall revenge his father’s death, and kill his mother, and then the brother shall kill his mother’s murderer, and he also will meet with an avenger for killing his brother.”

“ What end shall there be to such” inhuman and “ sad accidents ?” If in this there be injustice, it is against natural reason ; and, if it be evil, and disorders the felicity and security of society, it is also against natural reason : but if it be just, it is a strange justice, that is made up of so many inhumanities.

40. And now, if any man pretends specially to reason, to the ordinate desires and perfections of nature, and the sober discourses of philosophy, here is in Christianity, and no where else, enough to satisfy and inform his reason, to perfect his nature, and to reduce to act all the propositions of an intelligent and wise spirit. And the Holy Ghost is promised and given in our religion, to be an eternal band to keep our reason from returning to the darkenesses of the old creation, and to promote the ends of our natural and proper felicity. For it is not a vain thing, that St Paul reckons helps, and governments, and healings, to be fruits of the Spirit. For, since the two greatest blessings of the world, personal and political, consist, that in health, this in government ; and the ends of human felicity are served in nothing greater for the present interval, than in these two ; Christ did not only enjoin rare prescriptions of health, such as are fasting, temperance, chastity, and sobriety, and all the great endearments of government, (and unless they be sacredly observed, man is infinitely miserable ;) but also hath given his Spirit, that is, extraordinary aids to the promoting these two, and facilitating the work of nature ; that (as St Paul says at the end of a discourse to this very purpose) “ the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”*

41. I shall add nothing but this single consideration : God said to the

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

children of Israel, "Ye are a royal priesthood,"* a kingdom of priests: which was therefore true, because God reigned by the priests, and the priests lips did then preserve knowledge, and the people were to receive the law from their mouths; for God having, by laws of his own, established religion and the republic, did govern by the rule of the law, and the ministry of the priests. The priests said, "Thus saith the Lord;" and the people obeyed. And these very words are spoken to the Christian church: "Ye are a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." This is, God reigns over all Christendom, just as he did over the Jews. He hath now so given to them and restored respectively all those reasonable laws, which are in order to all good ends, personal, economical, and political, that if men will suffer Christian religion to do its last intention, if men will live according to it, there needs no other coercion of laws or power of the sword. The laws of God, revealed by Christ, are sufficient to make all societies of men happy; and over all good men God reigns by his ministers, by the preaching of the word. And this was most evident in the three first ages of the church, in which all Christian societies were for all their proper intercourses, perfectly guided, not by the authority and compulsion, but by the sermons of their spiritual guides; insomuch that St Paul sharply reprehends the Corinthians, that "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers;" as if he had said, "Ye will not suffer Christ to be your Judge, and his law to be your rule:" which indeed was a great fault among them, not only because they had so excellent a law so clearly described, (or, where they might doubt, they had infallible interpreters,) so reasonable and profitable, so evidently concurring to their mutual felicity; but also because God did design Jesus to be their King, to reign over them by spiritual regimen, as himself did over the Jews, till they chose a king. And when the emperors became Christian, the case was no otherwise altered, but that the princes themselves, submitting to Christ's yoke, were (as all other Christians are,) for their proportion, to be governed by the royal priesthood, that is, by the word preached by apostolical persons, the political interest remaining as before, save that, by being submitted to the laws of Christ, it received this advantage, that all justice was turned to be religion, and became necessary, and bound upon the conscience by Divinity. And when it happens, that a kingdom is converted to Christianity, the commonwealth is made a church, and Gentile priests are Christian bishops, and the subjects of the kingdom are servants of Christ, the religion of the nation is turned Christian, and the law of the nation made a part of the religion; there is no change of government, but that Christ is made King, and the temporal power is his substitute, and it is to promote the interest of obedience to him, as before it did to Christ's enemy; Christ having left his ministers as lieger ambassadors, to signify and publish the laws of Jesus, to pray all, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God; so that, over the obedient, Christ wholly reigns by his ministers publishing his laws; over the disobedient, by the prince also putting those laws in execution. And in this sense it is, that St Paul says, "To such (who live after the spirit) there is no law:" that is, there needs no coercion. But now, if we reject God from reigning over us, by the ministry of his word, by

* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

the empire of the royal priesthood, then we return to the condition of heathens, and persons sitting in darkness; then God hath armed the temporal power with a sword to cut us off. If we obey not God, speaking by his ministers, that is, if we live not according to the excellent laws of Christianity, that is, holily, soberly, and justly in all our relations, he hath placed three swords against us; the sword of the Spirit, against the unholy and irreligious; the sword of natural and supervening infelicities, upon the intemperate and unsober; and the sword of kings, against the unjust; to demonstrate the excellency of Christianity, and how certainly it leads to all the felicity of man; because every transgression of this law, according to its proportion, makes men unhappy and unfortunate.

42. What effect this discourse may have, I know not; I intended it to do honour to Christianity, and to represent it to be the best religion in the world, and the conjugation of all excellent things, that were in any religion, or in any philosophy, or in any discourses. For "whatsoever was honest, whatsoever was noble, whatsoever was wise, whatsoever was of good report, if there be any praise, if there be any virtue,"* it is in Christianity: for even to follow all these instances of excellency, is a precept of Christianity. And methinks, they that pretend to reason, cannot more reasonably endear themselves to the reputation of reason, than by endearing their reason to Christianity; the conclusions and belief of which is the most reasonable and perfect, the most excellent design, and complying with the noblest and most proper ends of man. And if this gate may suffice to invite such persons into the recesses of the religion, then I shall tell them, that I have dressed it in the ensuing books with some variety; and as the nature of the religion is, some parts whereof are apt to satisfy our discourse, some to move our affections, and yet all of this to relate to practice; so is the design of the following pages. For some men are wholly made up of passion, and their very religion is but passion, put into the family and society of holy purposes; and, for those, I have prepared considerations upon the special parts of the life of the holy Jesus; and yet there also are some things mingled in the least severe and most affectionate parts, which may help to answer a question, and appease a scruple, and may give rule for determination of many cases of conscience. For I have so ordered the considerations, that they spend not themselves in mere affections and ineffective passions, but they are made doctrinal, and little repositories of duty. But because of the variety of men's spirits and of men's necessities, it was necessary I should interpose some practical discourses more severe: for it is but a sad thought to consider, that piety and books of devotion are counted but entertainment for little understandings and softer spirits; and although there is much fault in such imperious minds, that they will not distinguish the weakness of the writers from the reasonableness and wisdom of the religion; yet I cannot but think, the books themselves are, in a large degree, the occasion of so great indevotion; because they are (some few excepted) represented naked in the conclusions of spiritual life, without or art or learning, and made apt for persons who can do nothing but believe and love; not for them that can consider and love. And it is not well, that since nothing is more reasonable and excellent in all perfections spiritual than the doctrines of the Spirit, or holy life; yet nothing is offered to us so

* Phil. iv. 8.

unlearnedly as this is, so miserable and empty of all its own intellectual perfections. If I could, I would have had it otherwise in the present books: for, since the understanding is not an idle faculty in a spiritual life, but hugely operative to all excellent and reasonable choices, it were very fit, that this faculty were also entertained by such discourses, which God intended as instruments of hallowing it, as he intended it towards the sanctification of the whole man. For want of it, busy and active men entertain themselves with notions infinitely unsatisfying and unprofitable: but in the meantime, they are not so wise; for, concerning those that study unprofitable notions, and neglect not only that which is wisest, but that also which is of most real advantage, I cannot but think, as Aristotle did of *Thales* and *Anaxagoras*, that “They may be learned, but they are not wise; or wise, but not prudent, when they are ignorant of such things, as are profitable to them; for, suppose they know the wonders of nature, and the subtilties of metaphysics, and operations mathematical; yet they cannot be prudent, who spend themselves wholly upon unprofitable and ineffective contemplations.” He is truly wise, that knows best to promote the best end, that which he is bound to desire; and is happy if he obtains, and miserable if he misses; and that is the end of a happy eternity, which is obtained by the only means of living according to the purposes of God, and the prime intentions of nature; natural and prime reason being now all one with the Christian religion. But then I shall only observe, that this part of wisdom, and the excellency of its secret and deep reason, is not to be discerned but by experience: the propositions of this philosophy being (as in many other) empirical, and best found out by observation of real and material events. So that I may say of spiritual learning, as *Quintilian* said of some of *Plato’s* books: *‘The secrets of the kingdom of heaven are not understood truly and thoroughly but by the sons of the kingdom; and by them too, in several degrees, and to various purposes; but to evil persons the whole system of this wisdom is insipid and flat, dull as the foot of a rock, and unlearned as the elements of our mother tongue. But so are mathematics to a Scythian boor, and music to a camel.’*

My great purpose is to advance the necessity, and to declare the manner and parts, of a good life; and to invite some persons to the consideration of all the parts of it, by intermixing something of pleasure with the use; others, by such parts which will better entertain their spirits, than a romance. I have followed the design of Scripture, and have given milk for babes, and for stronger men stronger meat; and in all I have despised my own reputation, by so striving to make it useful, that I was less careful to make it strict in retired senses, and embossed with unnecessary, but graceful ornaments. I pray God, this may go forth into a blessing to all that shall use it, and reflect blessings upon me all the way, that my spark may grow greater by kindling my brother’s taper, and God may be glorified in us both. If the reader shall receive no benefit, yet I intended him one, and I have laboured in order to it; and I shall receive a great recompense for that intention, if he shall please to say this prayer for me,—“That while I have preached to others, I may not become a cast-away.”

AN EXHORTATION TO THE IMITATION OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

HOWEVER the person of Jesus Christ was depressed with a load of humble accidents, and shadowed with the darkneses of poverty and sad contingencies, so that the Jews, and the contemporary ages of the Gentiles, and the apostles themselves, could not at first discern the brightest essence of divinity ; yet as a beauty, artificially covered with a thin cloud of Cyprus, transmits its excellency to the eye, made more greedy and apprehensive by that imperfect and weak restraint ; so was the sanctity and holiness of the life of Jesus glorious in its darkneses, and found confessors and admirers even in the midst of those despites, which were done him upon the contrariant designs of malice and contradictory ambition. Thus the wife of Pilate called him, "that just person ;" Pilate pronounced him "guiltless ;" Judas said he was "innocent ;" the devil himself called him "the Holy One of God." For however it might concern any man's mistaken ends, to dislike the purpose of his preaching and spiritual kingdom, and those doctrines, which were destructive of their complacencies and carnal securities ; yet they could not deny but that he was a man of God, of exemplar sanctity, of an angelical chastity, of a life sweet, affable, and complying with human conversation, and as obedient to government as the most humble children of the kingdom. And yet he was Lord of all the world.

2. And certainly very much of this was with a design, that he might shine to all the generations and ages of the world, and become a guiding star, and a pillar of fire to us in our journey. For we, who believe that Jesus was perfect God and perfect man, do also believe, that one minute of his intolerable passion, and every action of his, might have been satisfactory, and enough for the expiation and reconciliation of ten thousand worlds ; and God might, upon a less effusion of blood, and a shorter life of merit, if he had pleased, have accepted human nature to pardon and favour ; but, that the holy Jesus hath added so many excellent instances of holiness, and so many degrees of passion, and so many kinds of virtues, is, that he might become an example to us, and reconcile our wills to him, as well as our persons to his heavenly Father.

3. And indeed it will prove but a sad consideration, that one drop of blood might be enough to obtain our pardon, and the treasures of his blood running out till the fountain itself was dry, shall not be enough to procure our conformity to him ; that the smallest minute of his expense shall be enough to justify us, and the whole magazine shall not procure our sanctification ; that at a smaller expense God might pardon us, and at a greater we will not imitate him : for therefore "Christ hath suffered for us," saith the apostle, "leaving an example to us, that we might follow his steps."* The least of our wills cost Christ as much as the greatest of our sins. And therefore he calls himself "the Way, the Truth, and the Life ;" that as he redeems our souls from death to life, by becoming life to our persons ; so he is the truth to our understandings, and the way to our will and affections, enlightening that, and leading these in the paths of a happy eternity.

4. When the king of Moab was pressed hard by the sons of Isaac,† the

* 1 Pet. ii. 21.

† 2 Kings, iii. 27.

Israelites and Edomites, he took the king of Edom's eldest son, or, as some think, his own son, the heir of his kingdom, and offered him as a holocaust upon the wall; and the Edomites presently raised the siege at Kir-haraseth, and went to their own country. The same, and much more, was God's design, who took not his enemy's but his own Son, his only begotten Son, and God himself, and offered him up in sacrifice, to make us leave our perpetual fightings against Heaven; and if we still persist, we are hardened beyond the wildnesses of the Arabs and Edomites, and neither are receptive of the impresses of pity nor humanity, who neither have compassion to the suffering of Jesus, nor compliance with the designs of God, nor conformity to the holiness and obedience of our Guide. In a dark night, if an ignis fatuus do but precede us, the glaring of its lesser flames does so amuse our eyes, that we follow it into rivers and precipices, as if the ray of that false light were designed on purpose to be our path to tread in: and therefore not to follow the glories of the Sun of Righteousness, who indeed leads us over rocks and difficult places, but secures us against the danger, and guides us into safety, is both the greatest indecency and unthankfulness in the world.

5. In the great council of eternity, when God set down the laws, and knit fast the eternal bands of predestination, he made it one of his great purposes to make his Son like us, that we also might be like his holy Son; he, by taking our nature; we, by imitating his holiness: "God hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son," saith the apostle. For the first in every kind is in nature propounded as the pattern of the rest; and as the sun, the prince of all the bodies of light, and the fire of all warm substances, is the principal, the rule and the copy, which they in their proportions imitate and transcribe; so is the Word incarnate the great example of all the predestinate; for "he is the first-born among many brethren." And therefore it was a precept of the apostle; and by his doctrine we understand his meaning. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." The similitude declares the duty. As a garment is composed and made of the same fashion with the body, and is applied to each part in its true figure and commensuration; so should we put on Christ, and imitate the whole body of his sanctity, conforming to every integral part, and express him in our lives, that God, seeing our impresses, may know whose image and superscription we bear, and we may be acknowledged for sons, when we have the air, and features, and resemblances of our elder brother.

6. In the practice of this duty we may be helped by certain considerations, which are like the proportion of so many rewards. For this, according to the nature of all holy exercises, stays not for pay, till its work be quite finished; but, like music in churches, is pleasure and piety, and salary besides. So is every work of grace; full of pleasure in the execution, and is abundantly rewarded, besides the stipend of a glorious eternity.

7. First: I consider that nothing is more honourable than to be like God; and the heathens, worshippers of false deities, grew vicious upon that stock; and we who have fondnesses of imitation, counting a deformity full of honour, if by it we may be like our prince, (for pleasures were in their height in Capræ, because Tiberius there wallowed in them, and a wry neck in Nero's court was the mode of gallantry,) might do well to make our imitations prudent and glorious; and, by propounding excellent examples, heighten our faculties to the capacities of an evenness with the best of precedents.

He that strives to imitate another, admires him, and confesses his own imperfections ; and therefore, that our admirations be not flattering, nor our confessions fantastic and impertinent, it were but reasonable to admire Him, from whom really all perfections do derive, and before whose glories all our imperfections must confess their shame, and needs of reformation. God, by a voice from heaven, and by sixteen generations of miracles and grace, hath attested the holy Jesus to be the Fountain of Sanctity, and the “wonderful Counsellor,” and “the Captain of our sufferings,” and the Guide of our manners, by being his beloved Son, in whom he took pleasure and complacency to the height of satisfaction : and if any thing in the world be motive of our affections, or satisfactory to our understandings, what is there in heaven or earth we can desire or imagine beyond a likeness to God, and participation of the divine nature and perfections ? And therefore, as, when the sun arises, every man goes to his work, and warms himself with his heat, and is refreshed with his influences, and measures his labour with his course ; so should we frame all the actions of our life by his light, who hath shined by an excellent righteousness, that we no more walk in darkness, or sleep in lethargies, or run a gazing after the lesser and imperfect beauties of the night. It is the weakness of the organ, that makes us hold our hand between the sun and us, and yet stand staring upon a meteor or an inflamed jelly. And our judgments are as mistaken, and our appetites are as sottish, if we propound to ourselves, in the courses and designs of perfections, any copy but of him, or something like him, who is the most perfect. And lest we think his glories too great to behold.

8. Secondly, I consider, that the imitation of the life of Jesus is a duty of that excellency and perfection ; that we are helped in it, not only by the assistance of a good and a great example, which possibly might be too great, and scare our endeavours and attempts ; but also by its easiness, compliance and proportion to us. For Jesus, in his whole life, conversed with men with a modest virtue, which, like a well-kindled fire fitted with just materials, cast a constant heat ; not like an inflamed heap of stubble, glaring with great emissions, and suddenly stooping into the thickness of smoke. His piety was even, constant, unblameable, complying with civil society, without affrightment of precedent, or prodigious instances of actions greater than the imitation of men. For if we observe our blessed Saviour in the whole story of his life, although he was without sin, yet the instances of his piety were the actions of a very holy, but of an ordinary life ; and we may observe this difference in the story of Jesus from ecclesiastical writings of certain beatified persons, whose life is told rather to amaze us, and to create scruples, than to lead us in the evenness and serenity of a holy conscience. Such are the prodigious penances of Simeon Stylites, the abstinence of the religious retired into the mountain Nitria, but especially the stories of later saints, in the midst of a declining piety and aged Christendom, where persons are represented holy by way of idea and fancy, if not to promote the interests of a family and institution. But our blessed Saviour, though his eternal union and adherencies of love and obedience to his heavenly Father were next to infinite, yet in his external actions, in which only, with the correspondence of the Spirit in those actions, he propounds himself imitable, he did so converse with men, that men, after that example, might for ever converse with him. We find that some saints have had excrescences and eruptions of holiness in the instances of uncommanded duties, which in the

same particulars we find not in the story of the life of Jesus. John Baptist was a greater mortifier than his Lord was; and some princes have given more money than all Christ's family did, whilst he was alive: but the difference, which is observable, is, that although some men did some acts of counsel in order to attain that perfection, which in Jesus was essential and unalterable, and was not acquired by degrees, and means of danger and difficulty; yet no man ever did his whole duty, save only the holy Jesus. The best of men did sometimes actions not precisely and strictly requisite, and such as were besides the precept; but yet, in the greatest flames of their shining piety, they prevaricated something of the commandment. They that have done the most things beyond, have also done some things short of their duty; but Jesus, who intended himself the example of piety, did in manners as in the rule of faith, which, because it was propounded to all men, was fitted to every understanding; it was true, necessary, short, easy, and intelligible. So was his rule and his copy fitted, not only with excellencies worthy, but with compliances possible to be imitated: of glories so great, that the most early and constant industry must confess its own imperfections; and yet so sweet and humane, that the greatest infirmity, if pious, shall find comfort and encouragement. Thus God gave his children manna from heaven: and though it was excellent, like the food of angels, yet it conformed to every palate, according to that appetite, which their several fancies and constitutions did produce.

9. But now, when the example of Jesus is so excellent, that it allures and tempts with its facility and sweetness, and that we are not commanded to imitate a life, whose story tells of ecstasies in prayer, and abstractions of senses, and immaterial transportations, and fastings to the exinanition of spirits, and disabling all animal operations; but a life of justice and temperance, of chastity and piety, of charity and devotion; such a life, without which human society cannot be conserved, and by which, as our irregularities are made regular, so our weaknesses are not upbraided, nor our miseries made a mockery. We find so much reason to address ourselves to a heavenly imitation of so blessed a pattern, that the reasonableness of the thing will be a great argument to chide every degree and minute of neglect. It was a strange and a confident encouragement, which Phocion used to a timorous Greek, who was condemned to die with him:—"Is it not enough to thee, that thou must die with Phocion?" I am sure, he that is most incurious of the issues of his life, is yet willing enough to reign with Jesus, when he looks on the glories represented without the duty; but it is a very great stupidity and unreasonableness, not to live with him in the imitation of so holy and so prompt a piety. It is glorious to do what he did, and a shame to decline his sufferings, when there was a God to hallow and sanctify the actions, and a man clothed with infirmity to undergo the sharpness of the passion; so that the glory of the person added excellency to the first, and the tenderness of the person excused not from suffering the latter.

10. Thirdly: Every action of the life of Jesus, as it is imitable by us, is of so excellent merit, that, by making up the treasure of grace, it becomes full of assistances to us, and obtains of God grace to enable us to its imitation, by way of influence and impetration. For, as in the acquisition of habits, the very exercise of the action does produce a facility to the action, and in some proportion becomes the cause of itself; so does every exercise

of the life of Christ kindle its own fires, inspires breath into itself, and makes an univocal production of itself in a differing subject. And Jesus becomes the fountain of spiritual life to us, as the prophet Elisha to the dead child ; when he stretched his hands upon the child's hands, laid his mouth to his mouth, and formed his posture to the boy, and breathed into him, the spirit returned again into the child, at the prayer of Elisha ; so when our lives are formed into the imitation of the life of the holiest Jesus, the Spirit of God returns into us, not only by the efficacy of the imitation, but by the merit and impetration of the actions of Jesus. It is reported in the Bohemian story, that St Wenceslaus, their king, one winter night going to his devotions, in a remote church, barefooted in the snow and sharpness of unequal and pointed ice, his servant Podavivus, who waited upon his master's piety, and endeavoured to imitate his affections, began to faint through the violence of the snow and cold, till the king commanded him to follow him, and set his feet in the same footsteps, which his feet should mark for him : the servant did so, and either fancied a cure, or found one ; for he followed his prince, helped forward with shame and zeal to his imitation, and by the forming footsteps for him in the snow. In the same manner does the blessed Jesus ; for, since our way is troublesome, obscure, full of objection and danger, apt to be mistaken and to affright our industry, he commands us to mark his footsteps, to tread where his feet have stood, and not only invites us forward by the argument of his example, but he hath trodden down much of the difficulty, and made the way easier, and fit for our feet. For he knows our infirmities, and himself hath felt their experience in all things but in the neighbourhoods of sin ; and therefore he hath proportioned a way and a path to our strengths and capacities, and, like Jacob, hath marched softly and in evenness with the children and the cattle, to entertain us by the comforts of his company, and the influences of a perpetual guide.

11. Fourthly : But we must know, that not every thing which Christ did, is imitable by us ; neither did he, in the work of our redemption, in all things imitate his heavenly Father. For there are some things which are issues of an absolute power, some are expresses of supreme dominion, some are actions of a judge. And therefore Jesus prayed for his enemies, and wept over Jerusalem, when at the same instant his eternal Father laughed them to scorn ; for he knew that their day was coming, and himself had decreed their ruin. But it became the holy Jesus to imitate his Father's mercies ; for himself was the great instrument of the eternal compassion, and was the instance of mercy ; and therefore, in the operation of his Father's design, every action of his was univocal, and he showed the power of his divinity in nothing but in miracles of mercy, and illustrations of faith, by creating arguments of credibility. In the same proportion we follow Jesus, as himself followed his father : for what he abated by the order to his intendment and design, we abate by the proportions of our nature ; for some excellent acts of his were demonstrations of divinity, and an excellent grace poured forth upon him without measure was their instrument ; to which proportions if we should extend our infirmities, we should crack our sinews, and dissolve the silver cords, before we could entertain the instances, and support the burden. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights ; but the manner of our fastings hath been in all ages limited to the term of an artificial day ; and in the primitive observations and the Jewish

rites, men did eat their meal, as soon as the stars shone in the firmament. We never read that Jesus laughed, and but once that he rejoiced in spirit ; but the declensions of our natures cannot bear the weight of a perpetual grave deportment, without the intervals of refreshment and free alacrity. Our ever blessed Saviour suffered the devotion of Mary Magdalene to transport her to an expensive expression of her religion, and twice to anoint his feet with costly nard : and yet if persons, whose conditions were of no greater lustre or resplendency of fortune, than was conspicuous in his family and retinue, should suffer the same profusion upon the dressing and perfuming their bodies, possibly it might be truly said, "It might better be sold, and distributed to the poor." This Jesus received, as he was the Christ and anointed of the Lord ; and by this he suffered himself to be designed to burial, and he received the oblation as eucharistical for the ejection of seven devils ; for "therefore she loved much."

12. The instances are not many. For however Jesus had some extraordinary transvolutions, and acts of emigration beyond the lines of his even and ordinary conversation, yet it was but seldom ; for his being exemplary was of so great consideration, that he chose to have fewer instances of wonder, that he might transmit the more of an imitable virtue. And therefore we may establish this for a rule and limit of our imitations : because Christ, our Lawgiver, hath described all his father's will in sanctions and signature of laws ; whatsoever he commanded, and whatsoever he did, of precise morality, or in pursuance of the laws of nature, in that we are to trace his footsteps ; and in these his laws and his practice differ but as a map and a guide, a law and a judge, a rule and a precedent. But in the special instances of action, we are to abate the circumstances, and to separate the obedience from the effect : whatsoever was moral in a ceremonial performance, that is highly imitable ; and the obedience of sacrificing, and the subordination to laws actually in being, even now they are abrogated, teach us our duty, in a differing subject, upon the like reason. Jesus's going up to Jerusalem to the feasts, and his observation of the sabbaths, teach us our duty in celebration of festivals constituted by a competent and just authority. For that which gave excellency to the observation of Mosaical rites, was an evangelical duty ; and the piety of obedience did not only consecrate the observations of Levi, but taught us our duty in the constitutions of Christianity.

13. Fifthly ; As the holy Jesus did some things, which we are not to imitate ; so we also are to do some things, which we cannot learn from his example. For there are some of our duties, which presuppose a state of sin, and some suppose a violent temptation and promptness to it ; and the duties of prevention, and the instruments of restitution, are proper to us, but conveyed only by precept, and not by precedent. Such are all the parts and actions of repentance, the duties of mortification and self-denial. For whatsoever the holy Jesus did, in the matter of austerity, looked directly upon the work of our redemption, and looked back only on us by a reflex act, as Christ did on Peter, when he looked him into repentance. Some states of life also there are, which Jesus never led ; such are those of temporal governors, kings and judges, merchants, lawyers, and the state of marriage : in the course of which lives many cases do occur, which need a precedent and the vivacity of an excellent example, especially since all the rules, which they have, have not prevented the subtilty of the many inventions,

which men have found out, nor made provision for all contingencies. Such persons, in all their special needs, are to govern their actions by the rules of proportion, by analogy to the holiness of the person of Jesus, and the sanctity of his institution; considering what might become a person professing the discipline of so holy a Master, and what he would have done in the like case; taking our heights by the excellence of his innocency and charity. Only remember this, that, in such cases, we must always judge on the strictest side of piety and charity if it be a matter concerning the interest of a second person; and that, in all things, we do those actions which are farthest removed from scandal, and such as towards ourselves are severe; towards others, full of gentleness and sweetness: for so would the righteous and merciful Jesus have done. These are the best analogies and proportions. And in such cases, when the wells are dry, let us take water from a cistern, and propound to ourselves some exemplar saint, the necessities of whose life have determined his piety to the like occurrences.

14. But now, from these particulars we shall best account to what the duty of the imitation of Jesus does amount: for it signifies, that we "should walk as he walked," tread in his steps, with our hand upon the guide, and our eye upon his rule; that we should do glory to him, as he did to his Father; and that whatsoever we do, we should be careful that it do him honour, and no reproach to his institution; and then account these to be the integral parts of our duty, which are imitation of his actions, or his spirit, of his rule, or his life; there being no better imitation of him than in such actions as do him pleasure, however he hath expressed or intimated the precedent.

15. He that gives to the poor, takes Jesus by the hand; he that patiently endures injuries and affronts, helps him to bear his cross; he that comforts his brother in affliction, gives an amiable kiss of peace to Jesus; he that bathes his own and his neighbour's sins in tears of penance and compassion, washes his Master's feet: we lead Jesus into the recesses of our heart by holy meditations; and we enter into his heart when we express him in our actions; for so the apostle says, "He that is in Christ, walks as he also walked." * But thus the actions of our life relate to him by way of worship and religion; but the use is admirable and effectual, when our actions refer to him as to our copy, and we transcribe the original to the life. He that considers with what affections and lancements of spirit, what effusions of love Jesus prayed, what fervours and assiduity, what innocency of wish, what modesty of posture, what subordination to his Father, and conformity to the Divine pleasure, were in all his devotions, is taught and excited to holy and religious prayer; the rare sweetness of his deportment in all temptations and violences of his passion, his charity to his enemies, his sharp reprehensions to the Scribes and Pharisees, his ingenuity toward all men, are living and effectual sermons to teach us patience, and humility, and zeal, and candid simplicity, and justice in all our actions. I add no more instances, because all the following discourses will be prosecutions of this intendment. And the life of Jesus is not described to be like a picture in a chamber of pleasure, only for beauty, and entertainment of the eye; but like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, whose every feature is a precept, and

* 1 John, ii. 6.

the images converse with men by sense, and signification of excellent discourses.

16. It was not without great reason advised, that every man should propound the example of a wise and virtuous personage, as Cato, or Socrates, or Brutus ; and, by a fiction of imagination, to suppose him present as a witness, and really to take his life as the direction of all our actions. The best and most excellent of the old lawgivers and philosophers among the Greeks had an allay of viciousness, and could not be exemplary all over : some were noted for flatterers, as Plato and Aristippus ; some for incontinency, as Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, Theognis, Plato, and Aristippus again ; and Socrates, whom their oracle affirmed to be the wisest and most perfect man, yet was by Porphyry noted for extreme intemperance of anger, both in words and actions : and those Romans who were offered to them for examples, although they were great in reputation, yet they had also great vices ; Brutus dipped his hand in the blood of Caesar, his prince, and his father by love, endearments, and adoption ; and Cato was but a wise man all day, at night he was used to drink too liberally ; and both he and Socrates did give their wives unto their friends ; the philosopher and the censor were procurers of their wives' unchastity : and yet these were the best among the Gentiles. But how happy and richly furnished are Christians with precedents of saints, whose faith and revelations have been productive of more spiritual graces, and greater degrees of moral perfections ! And this I call the privilege of a very great assistance, that I might advance the reputation and account of the life of the glorious Jesus, which is not abated by the imperfections of human nature, as they were, but receives great heightenings and perfection from the Divinity of his person, of which they were never capable.

17. Let us therefore press after Jesus, as Elisha did after his master, with an inseparable prosecution, even whithersoever he goes ; that according to the reasonableness and proportion expressed in St Paul's advice, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we may also bear the image of the heavenly." * For, "In vain are we called Christians, if we live not according to the example and discipline of Christ, the Father of the institution." When St Laurence was in the midst of the torments of the grid-iron, he made this to be the matter of his joy and eucharist, that he was admitted to the gates through which Jesus had entered ; and therefore thrice happy are they, who walk in his courts all their days. And it is yet a nearer union and vicinity, to imprint his life in our souls, and express it in our exterior converse ; and this is done by him only, who (as St Prosper describes the duty) despises all those gilded vanities which he despised, that fears none of those sadnesses which he suffered, that practises or also teaches those doctrines which he taught, and hopes for the accomplishment of all his promises. And this is truest religion, and the most solemn adoration.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal, holy, and most glorious Jesus, who hast united two natures of distance infinite, descending to the lownesses of human nature, that thou mightest exalt human nature to a participation of the Divinity ; we, thy

* 1 Cor. xv. 49.

people, that sat in darkness and in shadows of death, have seen great light, to entertain our understandings and enlighten our souls with its excellent influences; for the excellency of thy sanctity, shining gloriously in every part of thy life, is like thy angel, the pillar of fire, which called thy children from the darknesses of Egypt. Lord, open mine eyes, and give me power to behold thy righteous glories; and let my soul be so entertained with affections and holy ardours, that I may never look back upon the flames of Sodom. but may follow thy light, which recreates and enlightens, and guides us to the mountains of safety, and sanctuaries of holiness. Holy Jesus, since thy image is imprinted on our nature by creation, let me also express thy image by all the parts of a holy life, conforming my will and affections to thy holy precepts; submitting my understanding to thy dictates and lessons of perfection; imitating thy sweetnesss and excellencies of society, thy devotion in prayer, thy conformity to God, thy zeal, tempered with meekness, thy patience heightened with charity; that heart, and hands, and eyes, and all my faculties, may grow up with the increase of God, till I come to the full measure of the stature of Christ, even to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus; that at last in thy light I may see light, and reap the fruits of glory from the seeds of sanctity, in the imitation of thy holy life, O blessed and holy Saviour Jesus! Amen.

RETIRED AND PRIVATE PIETY.

IT is not altogether inconsiderable to observe, that the holy virgin came to a great perfection and state of piety by a few, and those modest and even, exercises and external actions. St Paul travelled over the world, preached to the Gentiles, disputed against the Jews, confounded heretics, writ excellently learned letters, suffered dangers, injuries, affronts, and persecutions to the height of wonder, and by these violences of life, action, and patience, obtained the crown of an excellent religion and devotion. But the holy virgin, although she was engaged sometimes in an active life, and in the exercise of an ordinary, and small economy and government, or ministries of a family, yet she arrived to her perfections by the means of a quiet and silent piety, the internal actions of love, devotion, and contemplation; and instructs us, that not only those who have opportunity and powers of a magnificent religion, or a pompous charity, or miraculous conversion of souls, or assiduous and effectual preachings, or exterior demonstrations of corporal merey, shall have the greatest crowns, and the addition of degrees and accidental rewards; but the silent affections, the splendours of an internal devotion, the unions of love, humility, and obedience, the daily offices of prayer and praises sung to God, the acts of faith and fear, of patience and meekness, of hope and reverence, repentance and charity, and those graces which walk in a veil and silence, make great ascents to God, and as sure progress to favour and a crown, as the more ostentous and laborious exercises of a more solemn religion. No man needs to complain of want of power or opportunities for religious perfections: a devout woman in her closet, praying with much zeal and affection for the conversion of souls, is

in the same order to a "shining like the stars in glory," as he who, by excellent discourses, puts it into a more forward disposition to be actually performed. And possibly her prayers obtained energy and force to my sermon, and made the ground fruitful, and the seed spring up to life eternal. Many times God is present in the still voice and private retirements of a quiet religion, and the constant spiritualities of an ordinary life; when the loud and impetuous winds, and the shining fires of more laborious and expensive actions, are profitable to others only, like a tree of balsam, distilling precious liquor for others, not for its own use.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

JESUS was pleased to be born of a poor mother, in a poor place, in a cold winter's night, far from home, amongst strangers, with all the circumstances of humility and poverty. And no man will have cause to complain of his coarse robe, if he remembers the swaddling-clothes of this holy Child; nor to be disquieted at his hard bed, when he considers Jesus laid in a manger; nor to be discontented at his thin table, when he calls to mind, the King of heaven and earth was fed with a little breast-milk. But since the eternal wisdom of the Father, who "knew to choose the good, and refuse the evil," did choose a life of poverty, it gives us demonstration, that riches and honours, those idols of the world's esteem, are so far from creating true felicities, that they are not of themselves eligible in the number of good things: however, no man is to be ashamed of innocent poverty, of which many wise men make vows, and of which the holy Jesus made election, and his apostles after him made public profession. And if any man will choose and delight in the affluence of temporal good things, suffering himself to be transported with captive affections in the pleasures of every day, he may well make a question, whether he shall speed as well hereafter; since God's usual method is, that they only who follow Christ here, shall be with him for ever.

The condition of the person who was born, is here of greatest consideration. For he that cried in the manger, that sucked the paps of a woman, that hath exposed himself to poverty and a world of inconveniencies, is "the Son of the living God," of the same substance with his Father, begotten before all ages, before the morning stars; he is God eternal. He is also, by reason of the personal union of the Divinity with his human nature, "the Son of God;" not by adoption, as good men and beatified angels are, but by an extraordinary and miraculous generation. He is "the heir" of his Father's glories and possessions, not by succession, (for his Father cannot die,) but by an equality of communication. He is "the express image of his Father's person," according to both natures; the miracle and excess of his Godhead being, as upon wax, printed upon all the capacities of his humanity. And, after all this, he is our Saviour; that to our duties of wonder and adoration, we may add the affections of love and union, as himself, besides his being admirable in himself, is become profitable to us.

Here then are concentrated the prodigies of greatness and goodness, of

wisdom and charity, of meekness and humility, and march all the way in mystery and incomprehensible mixtures ; if we consider him in the bosom of his Father, where he is seated by the postures of love and essential felicity ; and in the manger, where love also placed him, and an infinite desire to communicate his felicities to us. As he is God, his throne is in the heaven, and he fills all things by his immensity : as he is man, he is circumscribed by an uneasy cradle, and cries in a stable. As he is God, he is seated upon a super-exalted throne ; as man, exposed to the lowest estate of uneasiness and need. As God, clothed in a robe of glory, at the same instant when you may behold and wonder at his humanity, wrapped in cheap and unworthy cradle-bands. As God, he is encircled with millions of angels ; as man, in the company of beasts. As God, he is the eternal Word of the Father, eternal, sustained by himself, all-sufficient, and without need : and yet he submitted himself to a condition, imperfect, inglorious, indigent, and necessitous. And this consideration is apt and natural to produce great affections of love, duty, and obedience, desires of union and conformity to his sacred person, life, actions, and laws ; that we resolve all our thoughts, and finally determine all our reason and our passions and capacities, upon that saying of St Paul,—“ He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be accursed.”*

RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF DEVOUT MEDITATION.

FIRST ; every wise person that intends to furnish himself with affections of religion, or detestation against a vice, or glorifications of a mystery, still will proportion the mystery, and fit it with such circumstances of fancy and application, as, by observation of himself, he knows aptest to make impression. It was a wise design of Mark Antony, when he would stir up the people to revenge the death of Cæsar ; he brought his body to the pleading-place, he showed his wounds, held up the rent mantle, and showed them the garment, that he put on that night, in which he beat the Nervii ; that is, in which he won a victory, for which his memory was dear to them ; he showed them that wound, which pierced his heart, in which they were placed by so dear a love, that he made them his heirs, and left to their public use places of delight and pleasure : and then it was natural, when he had made those things present to them which had once moved their love and his honour, that grief at the loss of so honourable and so loved a person should succeed ; and then they were lords of all ; their sorrow and revenge seldom slept in two beds. And thus holy meditation produces the passions and desires it intends ; it makes the object present and almost sensible ; it renews the first passions by a fiction of imagination ; it passes from the paschal parlour to Cedron, it tells the drops of sweat, and measures them, and finds them as big as drops of blood, and then conjectures at the greatness of our sins ; it fears in the midst of Christ's agonies, it hears his groans, it spies Judas's lantern afar off, it follows Jesus to Gabbatha, and

wonders at his innocence and their malice, and feels the strokes of the whip, and shrinks the head when the crown of thorns is thrust hard upon his holy brows ; and, at last, goes step by step with Jesus, and carries part of the cross, and is nailed fast with sorrow and compassion, and dies with love. For if the soul be the principle of its own actions, it can produce the same effects by reflex acts of the understanding, when it is assisted by the imaginative part, as when it sees the thing acted : only let the meditation be as minute, particular, and circumstantiate as it may ; for a widow, by representing the caresses of her dead husband's love, produces sorrow and the new affections of a sad endearment. It is too sure, that the recalling the circumstances of a past impurity does re-enkindle the flame, and entertain the fancy with the burnings of an impure fire : and this happens, not by any advantages of vice, but by the nature of the thing, and the efficacy of circumstances. So does holy meditation produce those impressions and signatures, which are the proper effects of the mystery, if presented in a right line and direct representation.

Secondly : He that means to meditate in the best order to the productions of piety, must not be inquisitive for the highest mysteries ; but the plainest propositions are to him of the greatest use and evidence. For meditation is the duty of all ; and therefore God hath fitted such matter for it, which is proportioned to every understanding ; and the greatest mysteries of Christianity are plainest, and yet most fruitful of meditation, and most useful to the production of piety. High speculations are as barren as the tops of cedars ; but the fundamentals of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine. For know, that it is no meditation, but it may be an illusion, when you consider mysteries to become more learned, without thoughts of improving piety. Let your affections be as high as they can climb towards God, so your consideration be humble, fruitful, and practically mysterious, " Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest," said David. The wings of an eagle would have carried him higher, but yet the innocent dove did furnish him with the better emblem to represent his humble design ; and lower meditations might sooner bring him to rest in God. It was a saying of Æginus, " that an old and a simple woman, if she loves Jesus, may be greater than was brother Bonaventure." Want of learning, and disability to consider great secrets of theology, do not at all retard our progress to spiritual perfections ; love to Jesus may be better promoted by the plainer understandings of honest and unlettered people, than by the finer and more exalted speculations of great clerks that have less devotion. For although the way of serving God by the understanding be the best and most lasting, yet it is not necessary the understanding should be dressed with troublesome and laborious notions : the reason that is in religion is the surest principle to engage our services, and more perpetual than the sweetnesses and the motives of affection ; but every honest man's understanding is then best furnished with the discourses and the reasonable parts of religion, when he knows those mysteries of religion upon which Christ and his apostles did build a holy life, and the superstructures of piety ; those are the best materials of his meditation.

So that meditation is nothing else but the using of all those arguments, motives, and irradiations, which God intended to be instrumental to piety. It is a composition of both ways : for it stirs up our affections by

reason and the way of understanding, that the wise soul may be satisfied in the reasonableness of the thing, and the affectionate may be entertained with the sweetnesses of holy passion; that our judgment be determined by discourse, and our appetites made active by the caresses of a religious fancy. And, therefore, the use of meditation is, to consider any of the mysteries of religion with purposes to draw from it rules of life, or affections to virtue, or detestation of vice; and from hence the man rises to devotion, and mental prayer, and intercourse with God; and, after that, he rests himself in the bosom of beatitude, and is swallowed up with the comprehensions of love and contemplation. These are the several degrees of meditation. But let us first understand that part of it which is duty, and then, if any thing succeed of a middle condition between duty and reward, we will consider also how that duty is to be performed, and how the reward is to be managed, that it may prove to be no illusion; therefore I add also this consideration.

Thirdly: Whatsoever pious purposes and deliberations are entertained in the act of meditation, they are carefully to be maintained and thrust forward to actual performances, although they were indefinite and indeterminate, and no other ways decreed but by resolutions and determinations of reason and judgment. For God assists every pious action according to its exigence and capacity; and therefore blesses holy meditations with results of reason, and prepossessions dogmatically decreeing the necessity of virtue, and the convenience of certain exercises in order to the purchase of it. He, then, that neglects to actuate such discourses, loses the benefit of his meditation; he is gone no farther than when he first set out, and neglects the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. For if, at any time, it be certain what spirit it is that speaks within the soul, it is most certain, that it is the good Spirit, that moves us to an act of virtue, in order to acquisition of the habit: and when God's grace hath assisted us so far in our meditation, that we understand our duty, and are moved with present arguments if we put not forth our hand and make use of them, we do nothing towards our duty; and it is not certain, that God will create graces in us, as he does the soul. Let every pious person think every conclusion of reason in his meditation to have passed an obligation upon him: and if he hath decreed, that fasting so often, and doing so many religious acts, is convenient and conducing to the production of a grace he is in pursuit of; let him know, that every such decree and reasonable proposition is the grace of God, instrumental to piety, part of his assistance, and therefore, in no case, to be extinguished.

Fourthly: in meditation, let the understanding be restrained, and under such prudent coercion and confinement, that it wander not from one discourse to another, till it hath perceived some fruit from the first; either that his soul be instructed in a duty, or moved by a new argument, or confirmed in an old, or determined to some exercise and intermedial action of religion, or hath broke out into some prayers and intercourse with God, in order to the production of a virtue. And this is the mystical design of the spouse in the Canticles of Solomon: "I adjure you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that you stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." * For it is lightness of spirit to pass

* Cant. iii. 5.

over a field of flowers and to fix nowhere, but to leave it without carrying some honey with us ; unless the subject be of itself barren and unfruitful, and then why was it chosen ? or that it is made so by our indisposition, and then indeed it is to be quitted. But (it is St Chrysostom's simile) as a lamb, sucking the breast of its dam and mother, moves the head from one part to another, till it hath found a distilling fontinel, and then it fixes, till it be satisfied, or the fountain cease dropping ; so should we, in meditation, reject such materials as are barren like the tops of hills, and fix upon such thoughts, which nourish and refresh ; and there dwell, till the nourishment be drawn forth, or so much of it as we can then temperately digest.

Fifthly : In meditation, strive rather for graces than for gifts, for affections in the way of virtue more than the overflowings of sensible devotion ; and, therefore, if thou findest any thing by which thou mayest be better, though thy spirit do not actually rejoice, or find any gust or relish in the manducation, yet choose it greedily. For although the chief end of meditation be affection, and not determinations intellectual ; yet there is choice to be had of the affections ; and care must be taken, that the affections be desires of virtue, or repudiations and aversions from something criminal ; not joys and transportations spiritual, comforts, and complacencies ; for they are no part of our duty : sometimes they are encouragements, and sometimes rewards ; sometimes they depend upon habitude and disposition of body, and seem great matters, when they have little in them ; and are more bodily than spiritual, like the gift of tears, and yearning of the bowels ; and sometimes they are illusions and temptations, at which if the soul stoops and be greedy after, they may prove like Hippomenes's golden apples to Atalanta, retard our course, and possibly do some hazard to the whole race. And this will be nearer reduced to practice, if we consider the variety of matter, which is fitted to the meditation in several states of men travelling towards heaven.

For the first beginners in religion are employed in the mastering of their first appetites, casting out their devils, exterminating all evil customs, lessening the proclivity of habits, and countermanding the too great forwardness of vicious inclinations ; and this, which divines call the purgative way, is wholly spent in actions of repentance, mortification, and self-denial : and therefore, if a penitent person snatches at comforts, or the tastes of sensible devotion, his repentance is too delicate ; it is but a rod of roses and jessamine. If God sees the spirit broken all in pieces, and that it needs a little of the oil of gladness for its support and restitution to the capacities of its duty, he will give it : but this is not to be designed, nor snatched at in the meditation ; tears of joy are not good expressions nor instruments of repentance ; we must not “gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles ;” no refreshments to be looked for here, but such only, as are necessary for support ; and when God sees they are, let not us trouble ourselves ; he will provide them. But the meditations, which are prompt to this purgative way and practice of first beginners, are not apt to produce delicacies, but in the sequel and consequent of it. “Afterwards it brings forth the pleasant fruit of righteousness,” but “for the present, it hath not joy in it,” no joy of sense, though much satisfaction to reason. And such are meditations of the fall of angels and man, the ejection of them from heaven, of our parents from paradise, the horror and obliquity of sin, the wrath of God, the severity of his anger, mortification of our body and spirit, self-denial,

the cross of Christ, death, and hell, and judgment, the terrors of an evil conscience, the insecurities of a sinner, the unreasonableness of sin, the troubles of repentance, the worm and sting of a burdened spirit, the difficulties of rooting out evil habits, and the utter abolition of sin: if these nettles bear honey, we may fill ourselves; but such sweetnesss spoil the operations of these bitter potions. Here, therefore, let your addresses to God, and your mental prayers, be affectionate desires of pardon, humble considerations of ourselves, thoughts of revenge against our crimes, designs of mortification, indefatigable solicitations for mercy, expresses of shame and confusion of face; and he meditates best in the purgative way, that makes these affections most operative and high.

After our first step is taken, and the punitive part of repentance is resolved on, and begun, and put forward into good degrees of progress, we then enter into the illuminative way of religion, and set upon the acquist of virtues, and the purchase of spiritual graces; and, therefore, our meditations are to be proportioned to the design of that employment: such as are considerations of the life of Jesus, examples of saints, reasons of virtue, means of acquiring them, designations of proper exercises to every pious habit, the eight beatitudes, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost, the promises of the Gospel, the attributes of God, as they are revealed to represent God to be infinite, and to make us religious, the rewards of heaven, excellent and select sentences of holy persons, to be as incentives of piety. These are the proper matter for proficients in religion. But then the affections producible from these are love of virtue, desires to imitate the holy Jesus, affections to saints and holy persons, conformity of choice, subordination to God's will, election of the ways of virtue, satisfaction of the understanding in the ways of religion, and resolutions to pursue them in the midst of all discomforts and persecutions; and our mental prayers or intercourse with God, which are the present emanations of our meditations, must be in order to these affections, and productions from those: and in all these, yet there is safety and piety, and no seeking of ourselves, but designs of virtue in just reason and duty to God, and for his sake; that is, for his commandment. And in all these particulars, if there be such a sterility of spirit, that there be no end served but of spiritual profit, we are never the worse; all that God requires of us is, that we will live well, and repent in just measure and right manner; and he that doth so, hath meditated well.

From hence, if a pious soul passes to affections of greater sublimity, and intimate and more immediate, abstracted and immaterial love, it is well; only remember, that the love God requires of us, is an operative, material, and communicative love; "If ye love me, keep my commandments:" so that still a good life is the effect of the sublimest meditation; and if we make our duty sure behind us, ascend up as high into the mountain as you can, so your ascent may consist with the securities of your person, the condition of infirmity, and the interests of your duty. According to the saying of Ildefonsus, "Our empty saying of lauds, and reciting verses in honour of his name, please not God so well, as the imitation of him does advantage to us; and a devout imitator pleases the spouse better than an idle panegyrist." Let your work be like his, your duty in imitation of his precept and example, and then sing praises as you list; no heart is large enough, no voice pleasant enough, no life long enough, nothing but an eternity of duration and a beatifical state can do it well: and therefore holy David joins them both:

“Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me ; and to him, that ordereth his conversation aright, I will show the salvation of God.”* All thanks and praise, without a right-ordered conversation, are but the echo of religion, a voice and no substance ; but if those praises be sung by a heart righteous and obedient, that is, singing with the spirit and singing with understanding, that is the music God delights in.

Sixthly : But let me observe and press this caution : It is a mistake, and not a little dangerous, when people, religious and forward, shall too promptly, frequently, and nearly, spend their thoughts in consideration of Divine excellencies. God hath shown thee merit enough to spend all thy stock of love upon him in the characters of his power, the book of the creature, the great tables of his mercy, and the lines of his justice ; we have cause enough to praise his excellencies in what we feel of him, and are refreshed with his influence, and see his beauties in reflection, though we do not put our eyes out with staring upon his face. To behold the glories and perfections of God with a more direct intuition, is the privilege of angels, who yet cover their faces in the brightness of his presence : it is only permitted to us to consider the back parts of God. And, therefore, those speculations are too bold and imprudent addresses, and minister to danger more than to religion, when we pass away from the direct studies of virtue, and those thoughts of God, which are the freer and safer communications of the Deity, which are the means of intercourse and relation between him and us, to those considerations concerning God which are metaphysical and remote, the formal objects of adoration and wonder, rather than of virtue and temperate discourses : for God in Scripture never revealed any of his abstracted perfections and remoter and mysterious distances, but with a purpose to produce fear in us, and therefore to chide the temerity and boldness of too familiar and nearer intercourse.

True it is, that every thing we see or can consider, represents some perfections of God ; but this I mean, that no man should consider too much and meditate too frequently, upon the immediate perfections of God, as it were by way of intuition, but as they are manifested in the creatures and in the ministries of virtue : and also, whenever God’s perfections be the matter of meditation, we should not ascend upwards into him, but descend upon our selves, like fruitful vapours drawn up into a cloud, descending speedily into a shower, that the effect of the consideration be a design of good life ; and that our loves to God be not spent in abstractions, but in good works and humble obedience. The other kind of love may deceive us ; and therefore so may such kind of considerations, which are its instrument.

I will not say, that all violences and extravagances of a religious fancy are illusions ; but I say, that they are all unnatural, not hallowed by the warrant of a revelation, nothing reasonable, nothing secure. I am not sure, that they ever consist with humility ; but it is confessed, that they are often produced by self-love, arrogancy, and the great opinion others have of us. I will not judge the condition of those persons, who are said to have suffered these extraordinaries ; for I know not the circumstances, or causes, or attendants, or the effects, or whether the stories be true that make report of them ; but I shall only advise, that we follow the intimation of our

* Psalm 1. 23.

blessed Saviour, that "we sit down in the lowest place, till the master of the feast comes, and bids us sit up higher." If we entertain the inward man in the purgative and illuminative way, that is, in actions of repentance, virtue, and precise duty, that is the surest way of uniting us to God, whilst it is done by faith and obedience ; and that also is love ; and in these peace and safety dwell. And after we have done our work, it is not discretion in a servant to hasten to his meal, and snatch at the refreshment of visions, unions, and abstractions ; but first we must gird ourselves, and wait upon the master, and not sit down ourselves, till we all be called at the great supper of the Lamb.

It was, therefore, an excellent desire of St Bernard, who was as likely as any to have such altitudes of speculation, if God had really dispensed them to persons holy, fantastic and religious : "I pray God grant to me peace of spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost, to compassionate others in the midst of my mirth, to be charitable in simplicity, to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to mourn with them that mourn ; and with these I shall be content : other exaltations of devotion I leave to apostles and apostolic men ; the high hills are for the harts and the climbing goats ; the stony rocks, and the recesses of the earth, for the conies." It is more healthful and nutritive to dig the earth, and to eat of her fruits, than to stare upon the greatest glories of the heavens, and live upon the beams of the sun : so unsatisfying a thing is rapture and transportation to the soul ; it often distracts the faculties, but seldom does advantage piety, and is full of danger in the greatest of its lustre. If ever a man be more in love with God by such instruments, or more endeared to virtue, or made more severe and watchful in his repentance, it is an excellent grace and gift of God ; but then this is nothing but the joys and comfort of ordinary meditation : those extraordinary, as they have no sense in them, so are not pretended to be instruments of virtue, but are, like Jonathan's arrows, shot beyond it, to signify the danger the man is in towards whom such arrows are shot. But if the person be made unquiet, inconstant, proud, pusillanimous, of high opinion, pertinacious, and confident in uncertain judgments, or desperate, it is certain they are temptations and illusions : so that, as all our duty consists in the ways of repentance and acquist of virtue ; so there rests all our safety, and, by consequence, all our solid joys ; and this is the effect of ordinary, pious, and regular meditations.

If I mistake not, there is a temptation like this, under another name, amongst persons whose religion hath less discourse and more fancy, and that is a familiarity with God ; which, indeed, if it were rightly understood, is an affection consequent to the illuminative way ; that is, an act or an effect of the virtue of religion and devotion, which consists in prayers and addresses to God, lauds, and eucharists, and hymns, and confidence of coming to the throne of grace, upon assurance of God's veracity and goodness infinite ; so that familiarity with God, which is an affection of friendship, is the intercourse of giving and receiving blessings and graces respectively : and it is produced by a holy life, or the being in the state of grace, and is part of every man's inheritance that is a friend of God. But when familiarity with God shall be esteemed a privilege of singular and eminent persons, not communicated to all the faithful, and is thought to be an admission to a nearer intercourse of secrecy with God, it is an effect of pride, and a mistake in judgment concerning the very same thing which the old

divines call the unitive way, if themselves that claim it understood the terms of art, and the consequents of their own intentions.

Only I shall observe one circumstance : That familiarity with God is nothing else but an admission to be of God's family, the admission of a servant, or a son in minority, and implies obedience, duty, and fear on our parts : care and providence, and love on God's part : and it is not the familiarity of sons, but the impudence of proud equals, to express this pretended privilege in even, unmannerly, and irreverent addresses and discourses ; and it is a sure rule, that whatsoever heights of piety, union, or familiarity, any man pretends to, it is of the devil, unless the greater the pretence be, the greater also be the humility of the man. The highest flames are the most tremulous ; and so are the most holy and eminent religious persons more full of awfulness, and fear, and modesty and humility : so that, in true divinity and right speaking, there is no such thing as the unitive way of religion, save only in the effects of duty, obedience, and the expresses of the precise virtue of religion. Meditations in order to good life, let them be as exalted as the capacity of the person and subject will endure, up to the height of contemplation : but if contemplation comes to be a distinct thing, and something besides or beyond a distinct degree of virtuous meditation, it is lost to all sense, and religion, and prudence. Let no man be hasty to eat of the fruits of paradise, before his time.

And now I shall not need to enumerate the blessed fruits of holy meditation ; for it is a grace, that is instrumental to all effects, to the production of all virtues, and the extinction of all vices ; and, by consequence, the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost within us is the natural or proper emanation from the frequent exercise of this duty ; only it hath something particularly excellent, besides its general influence ; for meditation is that part of prayer, which knits the soul to its right object, and confirms and makes actual our intention and devotion. Meditation is the tongue of the soul, and the language of our spirit ; and our wandering thoughts in prayer are but the neglects of meditation, and recessions from that duty ; and according as we neglect meditation, so are our prayers imperfect ; meditation being the soul of prayer, and the intention of our spirit. But, in all other things, meditation is the instrument and conveyance ; it habituates our affections to heaven, it hath permanent content, it produces constancy of purpose, despising of things below, inflamed desires of virtue, love of God, self-denial, humility of understanding, and universal correction of our life and manners.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE DEATH OF THE INNOCENTS, AND THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT.

1. HEROD, having called the wise men, and received information of their design, and the circumstances of the child, pretended religion too, and desired them to bring him word when they had found the babe, "that he might come and worship him ;" meaning to make a sacrifice of him to whom he should pay his adoration ; and, instead of investing the young

Prince with a royal purple, he would have stained his swaddling-bands with his blood. It is ever dangerous, when a wicked prince pretends religion ; his design is then foulest, by how much it needs to put on a fairer outside ; but it was an early policy in the world, and it concerned men's interests to seem religious, when they thought, that to be so was an abatement of great designs. When Jezebel designed the robbing and destroying Naboth, she sent to the elders to proclaim a fast ; for the external and visible remonstrances of religion leave in the spirits of men a great reputation of the seeming person, and therefore they will not rush into a furious sentence against his actions, at least not judge them with prejudice against the man, towards whom they are so fairly prepared, but do some violence to their own understanding, and either disbelieve their own reason, or excuse the fact, or think it but an error, or a less crime, or the incidences of humanity ; or, however, are so long in decreeing against him whom they think to be religious, that the rumour is abated, or the stream of indignation is diverted by other laborious arts, intervening before our zeal is kindled ; and so the person is unjudged, or, at least the design secured.

2. But in this, human policy was exceedingly infatuated : and though Herod had trusted his design to no keeper but himself, and had pretended fair, having religion for the word, and “ called the wise men privately,” and intrusted them with no employment but a civil request, an account of the success of their journey, which they had no reason, or desire to conceal ; yet his heart was opened to the eye of Heaven, and the sun was not more visible, than his dark purpose was to God ; and it succeeded accordingly : the Child was sent away, the wise men warned not to return, Herod was mocked and enraged ; and so his craft became foolish and vain : and so are all counsels intended against God, or any thing, of which he himself hath undertaken the protection. For, although we understand not the reasons of security, because we see not that admirable centering of infinite things in the Divine Providence, whereby God brings his purposes to act by ways unlooked for, and sometimes contradictory ; yet the public and perpetual experience of the world hath given continual demonstrations, that all evil counsels have come to nought ; that the succeeding of an impious design is no argument that the man is prosperous ; that the curse is then surest when his fortune spreads the largest ; that the contradiction and impossibilities of deliverance to pious persons are but an opportunity and engagement for God to do wonders, and to glorify his power, and to exalt his mercy, by the instances of miraculous or extraordinary events. And as the afflictions, happening to good men, are alleviated by the support of God's good Spirit ; and enduring them here, are but consignations to an honourable amends hereafter : so the succeeding prosperities of fortunate impiety, when they meet with punishment in the next, or in the third age, or in the deletion of a people five ages after, are the greatest arguments of God's providence, who keeps wrath in store, and forgets not to “ do judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong.” It was laid up with God, and was perpetually in his eye, being the matter of a lasting, durable, and unremitted anger.

3. But God had care of the holy Child ; he sent his angel to warn Joseph, with the Babe and his mother, to fly into Egypt. Joseph and Mary instantly arise ; and without inquiry, how they shall live there, or when they shall return, or how be secured, or what accommodations they shall have in their journey, at the same hour of the night, begin the pilgrimage with the

cheerfulness of obedience, and the securities of faith, and the confidence of hope, and the joys of love, knowing themselves to be recompensed for all the trouble they could endure ; that they were instruments of the safety of the holy Jesus ; that they then were serving God ; that they were encircled with the securities of the Divine Providence : and, in these dispositions, all places were alike ; for every region was a paradise, where they were in company with Jesus. And, indeed, that man wants many degrees of faith and prudence, who is solicitous for the support of his necessities, when he is doing the commandment of God. If he commands thee to offer a sacrifice, himself will provide a lamb, or enable thee to find one ; and he would remove thee into a state of separation, where thy body needs no supplies of provision, if he meant thou shouldst serve him without provisions. He will certainly take away thy need, or satisfy it ; * he will feed thee himself, as he did the Israelites ; or take away thy hunger, as he did to Moses ; or send ravens to feed thee, as he did to Elias ; or make charitable people minister to thee, as the widow to Elisha ; or give thee his own portion, as he maintained the Levites ; or make thine enemies to pity thee, as the Assyrians did the captive Jews. For whatsoever the world hath, and whatsoever can be conveyed by wonder or by providence, all that is thy security for provisions, so long as thou doest the work of God. And remember, that the assurance of blessing, and health and salvation, is not made by doing what we list, or being where we desire, but by doing God's will, and being in the place of his appointment. We may be safe in Egypt, if we be there in obedience to God ; and we may perish among the babes of Bethlehem, if we be there by our own election.

4. Joseph and Mary did not argue against the angel's message, because they had a confidence of their charge, who, with the breath of his mouth, could have destroyed Herod, though he had been abetted with all the legions marching under the Roman eagles ; but they, like the two cherubims about the propitiatory, took the child between them, and fled, giving way to the fury of persecution, which possibly, when the materials are withdrawn, might expire, and die like fire, which else would rage for ever. Jesus fled, undertook a sad journey, in which the roughness of the ways, his own tenderness, the youth of his mother, the old age of his supposed father, the smallness of their viaticum and accommodation for their voyage, the no-kindred they were to go to, hopeless of comforts and exterior supplies, were so many circumstances of poverty, and lesser strokes of the persecution ; things that himself did choose, to demonstrate the verity of his nature, the infirmity of his person, the humility of his spirit, the austerity of his undertaking, the burden of his charge ; and by which he did teach us the same virtues, he then expressed, and also consigned this permission to all his disciples, in future ages, that they also may fly from their persecutors, when the case is so, that their work is not done ; that is, they may glorify God with their lives, more than with their death. And of this they are ascertained by the arguments of prudent account : for sometimes we are called to glorify God by dying, and the interest of the church and the faith of many may be concerned in it ; then we must abide by it. In other cases it is true that Demosthenes said, in apology for his own escaping from a lost field, " A man that runs away, may fight again." And St Paul made use of a

* Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

guard of soldiers, to rescue him from the treachery of the Jewish rulers ; and of a basket, to escape from the inquisition of the governor of Damascus ; and the primitive Christians, of grots and subterraneous retirements ; and St Athanasius, of a fair lady's house ; and others, of deserts and graves ; as knowing it was no shame to fly, when their Master himself had fled, that his time and his work might be fulfilled ; and, when it was, he then laid his life down.

5. It is hard to set down particular rules, that may indefinitely guide all persons, in the stating of their own case ; because all things, that depend upon circumstances, are alterable unto infinite. But as God's glory and the good of the church are the great considerations to be carried before us all the way, and in proportion to them we are to determine and judge our questions ; so also our infirmities are allowable in the scrutiny : for I doubt not, but God intended it a mercy, and a compliance with human weakness, when he gave us this permission, as well as it was a design to secure the opportunities of his service, and the consummation of his own work by us. And since our fears, and the incommodities of flight, and the sadness of exile, and the insecurities and inconveniences of a strange and new abode, are part of the persecution ; provided that God's glory be not certainly and apparently neglected, nor the church evidently scandalized by our flight ; all interpretation of the question in favour of ourselves, and the declension of that part, which may tempt us to apostasy, or hazard our confidence, and the choosing the lesser part of the persecution, is not against the rule of faith, and always hath in it less glory, but oftentimes more security.

6. But thus far Herod's ambition transported him, even to resolutions of murder of the highest person, the most glorious and the most innocent upon earth ; and it represents that passion to be the most troublesome and vexatious thing, that can afflict the sons of men. Virtue hath not half so much trouble in it ; it sleeps quietly, without startings and affrighting fancies ; it looks cheerfully ; smiles with much serenity ; and though it laughs not often, yet it is ever delightful in the apprehensions of some faculty ; it fears no man nor no thing, nor is it discomposed ; and hath no concerns in the great alterations of the world, and entertains death like a friend, and reckons the issues of it as the greatest of its hopes : but ambition is full of distractions ; it teems with stratagems, as Rebecca with struggling twins ; and is swelled with expectation, as with a tympany ; and sleeps sometimes, as the wind in a storm, still and quiet for a minute, that it may burst out into an impetuous blast, till the cordage of his heart-strings crack ; fears when none is nigh ; and prevents things, which never had intention ; and falls under the inevitability of such accidents, which either could not be foreseen, or not prevented. It is an infinite labour to make a man's self miserable ; and the utmost acquit is so goodly a purchase, that he makes his days full of sorrow, to enjoy the troubles of a three years' reign ; for Herod lived but three years, or five at the most, after the flight of Jesus into Egypt. And therefore there is no greater unreasonableness in the world, than in the designs of ambition : for it makes the present certainly miserable, unsatisfied, troublesome, and discontent, for the uncertain acquit of an honour, which nothing can secure ; and, besides a thousand possibilities of miscarrying, it relies upon no greater certainty than our life ; and, when we are dead, all the world sees who was the fool. But it is a strange caitiveness and baseness of disposition of men, so furiously and unsatiably to

run after perishing and uncertain interests, in defiance of all the reason and religion of the world ; and yet to have no appetite to such excellencies, which satisfy reason, and content the spirit, and create great hopes, and ennoble our expectation, and are advantages to communities of men and public societies, and which all men teach, and all religion commands.

7. And it is not amiss to observe, how Herod vexed himself extremely upon a mistake. The child Jesus was born a King, but it was a King of all the world ; not confined within the limits of a province, like the weaker beauties of a torch, to shine in one room ; but, like the sun, his empire was over all the world ; and if Herod would have become but his tributary, and paid him the acknowledgments of his Lord, he should have had better conditions than under Cæsar, and yet have been as absolute in his own Jewry as he was before : “ His kingdom was not of this world ;” and he, that gives heavenly kingdoms to all his servants, would not have stooped to have taken up Herod’s petty coronet. But as it is a very vanity which ambition seeks, so it is a shadow, that disturbs and discomposes all its motions and apprehensions.

8. And the same mistake caused calamities to descend upon the church ; for some of the persecutions commenced upon pretence, Christianity was an enemy to government : but the pretence was infinitely unreasonable, and therefore had the fate of senseless allegations, it disbanded presently ; for no external accident did so incorporate the excellency of Christ’s religion, into the hearts of men, as the innocency of the men, their inoffensive deportment, the modesty of their designs, their great humility and obedience, a life expressly in enmity and contestation against secular ambition. And it is to be feared, that the mingling human interests with religion, will deface the image Christ hath stamped upon it. Certain it is, the metal is much abated by so impure alloy, while the Christian prince serves his end of ambition, and hears arms upon his neighbour’s country, for the service of religion, making Christ’s kingdom to invade Herod’s rights : and, in the state ecclesiastical, secular interests have so deep a portion, that there are snares laid to tempt a persecution, and men are invited to sacrilege, while the revenues of a church are a fair fortune for a prince. I make no scruple to find fault with painters that picture the poor saints with rich garments ; for, though they deserved better, yet they had but poor ones : and some have been tempted to cheat the saint, not out of ill-will to his sanctity, but love to his shrine, and to the beauty of the clothes, with which some imprudent persons have, of old time, dressed their images. So it is in the fate of the church ; persecution and the robes of Christ were her portion and her clothing ; and when she is dressed up in gawdy fortunes, it is no more than she deserves ; but yet sometimes it is occasion, that the devil cheats her of her holiness, and the men of the world sacrilegiously cheat her of her riches : and then, when God hath reduced her to that poverty he first promised and intended to her, the persecution ceases, and sanctity returns, and God curses the sacrilege, and stirs up men’s minds to religious donatives ; and all is well, till she grows rich again. And if it be dangerous in any man to be rich, and discomposes his steps in his journey to eternity ; it is not then so proportionable to the analogy of Christ’s poverty, and the inheritance of the church, to be sedulous in acquiring great temporalities, and putting princes in jealousy, and states into care for securities, lest all the temporal should run into ecclesiastical possession.

9. If the church have, by the active piety of a credulous, a pious, and less observant age, been endowed with great possessions, she hath rules enough, and poor enough, and necessities enough to dispend what she hath, with advantages to religion ; but then all she gets by it is, the trouble of an unthankful, a suspected, and unsatisfying dispensation ; and the church is made, by evil persons, a scene of ambition and stratagem ; and to get a German bishopric is to be a prince ; and to defend with niceness and suits of law every custom or lesser rite, even to the breach of charity and the scandal of religion, is called a duty : and every single person is bound to forgive injuries, and to quit his right rather than his charity ; but if it is not a duty in the church also, in them, whose life should be excellent to the degree of example, I would fain know, if there be not greater care taken to secure the ecclesiastical revenue, than the public charity and the honour of religion in the strict piety of the clergy ; for as the not engaging in suits may occasion bold people to wrong the church, so the necessity of engaging is occasion of losing charity, and of great scandal. I find not fault with a free revenue of the church ; it is, in some sense, necessary to governors, and to preserve the consequents of their authority : but I represent, that such things are occasion of much mischief to the church, and less holiness ; and, in all cases, respect should be had to the design of Christianity, to the prophecies of Jesus, to the promised lot of the church, to the dangers of riches, to the excellencies, and advantages, and rewards of poverty ; and if the church have enough to perform all her duties and obligations cheerfully, let her, of all societies, be soonest content. If she have plenty, let her use it temperately and charitably ; if she have not, let her not be querulous and troublesome. But however it would be thought upon, that though, in judging the quantum of the church's portion, the world thinks every thing too much, yet we must be careful we do not judge every thing too little ; and if our fortune be safe between envy and contempt, it is much mercy. If it be despicable, it is safe for ecclesiastics, though it may be accidentally inconvenient or less profitable to others ; but if it be great, public experience hath made remonstrance, that it mingles with the world, and dirties those fingers which are instrumental in consecration and the more solemn rites of Christianity.

10. Jesus fled from the persecution ; as he did not stand it out, so he did not stand out against it. He was careful to transmit no precedent or encouragement of resisting tyrannous princes, when they offer violence to religion and our lives. He would not stand disputing for privileges, nor calling in auxiliaries from the Lord of Hosts, who could have spared many legions of angels, every single spirit being able to have defeated all Herod's power ; but he knew it was a hard lesson to learn patience, and all the excuses in the world would be sought out to discourage such a doctrine, by which we are taught to die, or lose all we have, or suffer inconveniences, at the will of a tyrant : we need no authentic examples, much less doctrines, to invite men to war, from which we see Christian princes cannot be restrained with the engagements and peaceful theorems of an excellent and a holy religion, nor subjects kept from rebelling by the interests of all religions in the world, nor by the necessities and reasonableness of obedience, nor the endearments of all public societies of men ; one word, or an intimation from Christ, would have sounded an alarm, and put us into postures of defence, when all Christ's excellent sermons, and rare exemplar

actions, cannot tie our hands. But it is strange now, that, of all men in the world, Christians should be such fighting people, or that Christian subjects should lift up a thought against a Christian prince, when they had no intimation of encouragement from their Master, but many from him to endear obedience, and humility, and patience, and charity ; and these four make up the whole analogy, and represent the chief design and meaning of Christianity, in its moral constitution.

11. But Jesus, when himself was safe, could also have secured the poor babes of Bethlehem, with thousands of diversions and avocations of Herod's purposes, or by discovering his own escape in some safe manner, not unknown to the Divine wisdom ; but yet it did not so please God. He is Lord of his creatures, and hath absolute dominion over our lives, and he had an end of glory to serve upon these babes, and an end of justice upon Herod : and to the children he made such compensation, that they had no reason to complain, that they were so soon made stars, when they shone in their little orbs and participations of eternity : for so the sense of the church hath been, that they having died the death of martyrs, though incapable of making the choice, God supplied the defects of their will by his own entertainment of the thing ; that as the misery and their death, so also their glorification, might have the same author in the same manner of causality, even by a peremptory and unconditioned determination in these particulars. This sense is pious, and nothing unreasonable, considering that all circumstances of the thing make the case particular ; but the immature death of other infants is a sadder story : for though I have no warrant or thought, that it is ill with them after death, and, in what manner or degree of well-being it is, there is no revelation ; yet I am not of opinion, that the securing of so low a condition as theirs, in all reason, is like to be, will make recompense ; or is an equal blessing with the possibilities of such an eternity, as is proposed to them, who, in the use of reason and a holy life, glorify God with a free obedience ; and if it were otherwise, it were no blessing to live, till the use of reason ; and fools, and babes, were in the best, because in the securest condition, and certain expectation of equal glories.

12. As soon as Herod was dead, (for the Divine vengeance waited his own time for his arrest,) the angel presently brought Joseph word. The holy family was full of content and indifferency, not solicitous for return, not distrustful of the Divine providence, full of poverty, and sanctity, and content, waiting God's time, at the return of which God delayed not to recall them from exile ; "out of Egypt he called his Son," and directed Joseph's fear and course, that he should divert to a place in the jurisdiction of Philip, where the heir of Herod's cruelty, Archelaus, has nothing to do. And this very series of providence and care God expresses to all his sons by adoption ; and will determine the time, and set bounds to every persecution, and punish the instruments, and ease our pains, and refresh our sorrows, and give quietness to our fears, and deliverance from our troubles, and sanctify it all, and give a crown at last, and all in his good time, if we wait the coming of the angel, and in the mean time do our duty with care, and sustain our temporals with indifferency : and, in all our troubles and displeasing accidents, we may call to mind, that God, by his holy and most reasonable providence, hath so ordered it, that the spiritual advantages we may receive from the holy use of such incommodities, are of great recompense and interest ; and that, in such accidents, the holy Jesus, having gone

before us in precedent, does go along with us by love and fair assistances, and that makes the present condition infinitely more eligible, than the greatest splendour of secular fortune.

THE PRAYER.

O blessed and eternal God, who didst suffer thy holy Son to fly from the violence of an enraged prince, and didst choose to defend him in the ways of his infirmity, by hiding himself, and a voluntary exile; be thou a defence to all thy faithful people, whenever persecution arises against them; send them the ministry of angels to direct them into ways of security, and let thy Holy Spirit guide them in the paths of sanctity, and let thy providence continue in custody over their persons, till the times of refreshment and the day of redemption shall return. Give, O Lord, to thy whole church sanctity and zeal, and the confidences of a holy faith, boldness of confession, humility, content, and resignation of spirit, generous contempt of the world, and unmingled desires of thy glory and the edification of thy elect; that no secular interests disturb her duty, or discompose her charity, or depress her hopes, or, in any unequal degree, possess her affections, and pollute her spirit: but preserve her from the snares of the world and the devil, from the rapine and greedy desires of sacrilegious persons; and, in all conditions, whether of affluence or want, may she still promote the interests of religion: that, when plenteousness is within her palaces, and peace in her walls, that condition may then be best for her; and when she is made as naked as Jesus to his passion, then poverty may be best for her: that in all estates, she may glorify thee; and in all accidents and changes, thou mayest sanctify and bless her, and at last bring her to the eternal riches and abundances of glory, where no persecution shall disturb her rest. Grant this for sweet Jesus' sake, who suffered exile and hard journeys, and all the inconveniences of a friendless person, in a strange province; to whom, with thee and the eternal Spirit, be glory for ever, and blessing in all generations of the world, and for ever and ever. Amen.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE AND OF SOCIETY,

IN ORDER TO THE CULTIVATION OF HOLINESS.

THE Baptist had, till this time, that is, about thirty years, lived in the wilderness under the discipline of the Holy Ghost, under the tuition of angels, in conversation with God, in great mortification and disaffection to the world, his garments rugged and uneasy, his meat plain, necessary, and without variety, his employment prayers and devotion, his company wild beasts, in ordinary, in extraordinary, messengers from heaven; and all this, not undertaken of necessity to subdue a bold lust, or to punish a loud crime, but to become more holy and pure from the lesser stains and insinuations of too free infirmities, and to prepare himself for the great ministry of serving the holy Jesus in his publication. Thirty years he lived in great austerity; and it was a rare patience and exemplar mortification: we use

not to be so pertinacious in any pious resolutions, but our purposes disband upon the sense of the first violence ; we are free and confident of resolving to fast, when our bellies are full ; but, when we are called upon by the first necessities of nature, our zeal is cool, and dissoluble into air, upon the first temptation ; and we are not upheld in the violences of a short austerity without faintings and repentances to be repented of, and “inquirings after the vow is past,” and searching for excuses and desires to reconcile our nature and our conscience ; unless our necessity be great, and our sin clamorous, and our conscience laden, and no peace to be had without it ; and it is well, if upon any reasonable grounds, we can be brought to suffer contradictions of nature, for the advantages of grace. But it would be remembered that the Baptist did more upon a less necessity, and, possibly, the greatness of the example may entice us on a little farther than the customs of the world, or our own indevotions, would engage us.

But, after the expiration of a definite time, John came forth from his solitude, and served God in societies. He served God, and the content of his own spirit, by his conversing with angels, and dialogues with God, so long as he was in the wilderness ; and it might be some trouble to him to mingle with the impurities of men, amongst whom he was sure to observe such recesses from perfection, such violation of all things sacred, so great despite done to all ministries of religion, that to him, who had no experience or neighbourhood of actions criminal, it must needs be to his sublimed and clarified spirit more punitive and afflictive than his hair-shirt and his ascetic diet was to his body ; but now himself, that tried both, was best able to judge, which state of life was of greatest advantage and perfection.

“In his solitude he did breathe more pure inspiration ; heaven was more open, God was more familiar,” and frequent in his visitations. In the wilderness his company was angels, his employment meditations and prayer, his temptations simple and from within, from the impotent and lesser rebellions of a mortified body, his occasions of sin as few as his examples, his condition such, that, if his soul were at all busy, his life could not easily be other than the life of angels ; for his work and recreation, and his visits, and his retirements, could be nothing but the variety and differing circumstances of his piety : his inclinations to society made it necessary for him to repeat his addresses to God ; for his being a sociable creature, and yet in solitude, made that his conversing with God, and being partaker of Divine communications, should be the satisfaction of his natural desires, and the supply of his singularity and retirement ; the discomforts of which made it natural for him to seek out for some refreshment, and, therefore, to go to heaven for it, he having rejected the solaces of the world already. And all this, besides the innocencies of his silence, which is very great, and to be judged of in proportion to the infinite extravagancies of our language, there being no greater perfection here to be expected, than “not to offend in our tongue.” It was solitude and retirement, in which Jesus kept his vigils ; the desert places heard him pray ; in a privacy he was born ; in the wilderness he fed his thousands ; upon a mountain apart he was transfigured ; upon a mountain he died ; and from a mountain he ascended to his Father : in which retirements his devotion certainly did receive the advantage of convenient circumstances, and himself in such dispositions twice had the opportunities of glory.

And yet, after all these excellencies, the Spirit of God called the

Baptist forth to a more excellent ministry : for, in solitude, pious persons might go to heaven by the way of prayers and devotion ; but, in society, they might go to heaven by the way of mercy, and charity, and dispensations to others. In solitude, there are fewer occasions of vices, but there is also the exercise of fewer virtues ; and the temptations, though they be not from many objects, yet are, in some circumstances, more dangerous, not only because the worst of evils, spiritual pride, does seldom miss to creep upon those goodly oaks, like ivy, and suck their heart out, and a great mortifier without some complacencies in himself, or affectations or opinions, or something of singularity, is almost as unusual as virgin purity and unstained thoughts in the bordelli, (S. Hierom had tried it, and found it so by experience, and he it was that said so ;) but also, because whatsoever temptation does invade such retired persons, they have privacies enough to act it in, and no eyes upon them but the eye of Heaven, no shame to encounter withal, no fears of being discovered : and we know by experience, that a witness of our conversation is a great restraint to the inordination of our actions. Men seek out darknesses and secrecies to commit a sin ; “ and the evil, that no man sees, no man reproves ; ” and that makes the temptation bold and confident, and the iniquity easy and ready : so that, as they have not so many tempters, as they have abroad, so neither have they so many restraints ; their vices are not so many, but they are more dangerous in themselves, and to the world safe and opportune. And as they communicate less with the world, so they do less charity, and fewer offices of mercy : no sermons there but when solitude is made popular, and the city removes into the wilderness ; no comforts of a public religion, or visible remonstrances of the communion of saints ; and of all the kinds of spiritual mercy, only one can there properly be exercised ; and, of the corporal, none at all. And this is true in lives and institutions of less retirement, in proportion to the degree of the solitude : and, therefore, church-story reports of divers very holy persons, who left their wildernesses and sweetnesses of devotion in their retirement, to serve God in public by the ways of charity and exterior offices. Thus St Antony and Acepsamas came forth to encourage the fainting people to contend to death for the crown of martyrdom ; and the Aphraates, in the time of Valens, the Arian emperor, came abroad to assist the church, in the suppressing the flames, kindled by the Arian faction. And, upon this ground, they that are the greatest admirers of eremitical life, call the episcopal function “ the state of perfection,” and a degree of ministerial and honorary excellence beyond the pieties and contemplations of solitude, because of the advantages of gaining souls, and religious conversation, and going to God by doing good to others.

John the Baptist united both these lives ; and our blessed Saviour, who is the great precedent of sanctity and prudence, hath determined this question in his own instance ; for he lived a life common, sociable, humane, charitable, and public ; and yet, for the opportunities of especial devotion, retired to prayer and contemplation, but came forth speedily ; for the devil never set upon him but in the wilderness, and by the advantage of retirement. For as God hath many, so the devil hath some, opportunities of doing his work in our solitariness. But Jesus reconciled both ; and so did John the Baptist, in several degrees and manners : and from both we are taught, that solitude is a good school, and the world is the best theatre ; the institution is best there, but the practice here ; the wilderness hath the

advantage of discipline, and society opportunities of perfection ; privacy is the best for devotion, and the public for charity. In both, God hath many saints and servants ; and from both, the devil hath had some.

OF TEMPTATION.

1. GOD, who is the fountain of good, did choose rather to bring good out of evil than not to suffer an evil to be : not only because variety of accidents and natures do better entertain our affections, and move our spirits, who are transported, and suffer great impressions by a circumstance, by the very opposition and accidental lustre and eminency of contraries ; but also that the glory of the Divine providence, in turning the nature of things into the designs of God, might be illustrious, and that we may, in a mixed condition, have more observation, and, after our danger and our labour, may obtain a greater reward : for temptation is the opportunity of virtue and a crown ; God having disposed us in such a condition, that our virtues must be difficult, our inclinations averse and corrigible, our avocations many, our hostilities bitter, our dangers proportionable, that our labour might be great, our inclinations suppressed and corrected, our intentions be made actual, our enemies be resisted, and our dangers pass into security and honour, after a contestation, and a victory, and a perseverance. It is every man's case ; trouble is so certainly the lot of our nature and inheritance, and we are so sure to be tempted, that in the deepest peace and silence of spirit oftentimes is our greatest danger ; not to be tempted, is sometimes our most subtle temptation. It is certain, then, we cannot be secure when our security is our enemy ; but therefore we must do, as God himself does, make the best of it, and not be sad at that which is the public portion and the case of all men, but order it according to the intention, place it in the eye of virtue, that all its actions and motions may tend thither, there to be changed into felicities. But certain it is, unless we first be cut and hewn in the mountains, we shall not be fixed in the temple of God ; but, by incision and contusions, our roughnesses may become plain, or our sparks kindled, and we may be, either for the temple or the altar, spiritual building, or holy fire, something that God shall delight in, and then the temptation was not amiss.

2. And therefore we must not wonder, that oftentimes it so happens, that nothing will remove a temptation, no diligence, no advices, no labour, no prayers ; not because these are ineffectual, but because it is most fit the temptation should abide, for ends of God's designing : and although St Paul was a person whose prayers were likely to be prevalent, and his industry of much prudence and efficacy toward the drawing out of his thorn ; yet God would not do it, but continued his war, only promising to send him succour, " My grace is sufficient for thee ; " * meaning, he should have an enemy to try his spirit and improve it, and he should also have God's Spirit to comfort and support it ; but as, without God's grace, the enemy would spoil him, so without an enemy God's grace would never swell up into glory and crown him. For the caresses of a pleasant fortune are apt to swell into extravagances of spirit, and burst into the dissolution of manners : and unmixed joy is dangerous : but if, in our fairest flowers, we spy a locust, or feel the uneasiness

of a sackcloth under our fine linen, or our purple be tied with an uneven and a rude cord ; any little trouble, but to correct our wildnesses, though it be but a death's head served up at our feasts, it will make our tables fuller of health and freer from snare, it will allay our spirits, making them to retire from the weakness of dispersion, to the union and strength of a sober recollection.

3. Since, therefore, it is no part of our employment or our care, to be free from all the attempts of an enemy, but to be safe in despite of his hostility ; it now will concern us to inform ourselves of the state of the war in general, and then to make provisions, and to put on armour accordingly.

4. First : St Cyprian often observes, and makes much of the discourse that the devil, when he intends a battery, first views the strength and situation of the place. His sense, drawn out of the cloud of an allegory, is this : The devil first considers the constitution and temper of the person he is to tempt, and where he observes his natural inclination apt for a vice, he presents him with objects, and opportunity, and arguments fitting to his captive disposition ; from which he is likely to receive the smaller opposition ; since there is a party within, that desires his intromission. Thus, to lustful natures, he represents the softer whispers of the spirit of fornication ; to the angry and revengeful, he offers to consideration the satisfactions and content of a full revenge, and the emissions of anger : to the envious he makes panegyrics of our rivals, and swells our fancies to opinion, our opinion to self-love, self-love to arrogance, and these are supported by contempt of others, and all determine upon envy, and expire in malice. Now, in these cases, when our natures are captive and unhandsome, it were good we were conscious of our own weaknesses, and, by special arts and strengths of mortification, fortify that part, where we are apt and exposed to danger : we are sure enough to meet a storm there, and we also are likely to perish in it, unless we correct those aversenesses and natural indispositions, and reduce them to the evennesses of virtue, or the affections and moderation of a good nature. Let us be sure, that the devil take not a helve from our own branches to fix his axe, that so he may cut the tree down : and certainly he that does violence to his nature, will not be easy to the entertainment of affections preternatural and violent.

5. Secondly : But the devil also observes all our exterior accidents, occasions, and opportunities of action ; he sees what company we keep, he observes what degrees of love we have to our wives, what looseness of affection towards children, how prevalent their persuasions, how inconvenient their discourses, how trifling their interests, and to what degrees of determination they move us by their importunity or their power. The devil tempted Adam by his wife, because he saw his affections too pliant, and encircling her with the entertainment of fondness, joy, wonder, and amorous fancy : it was her hand that made the fruit beauteous to Adam ; "she saw it fair" of itself, "and so she ate ;" but Adam was not moved by that argument, but, "The woman gave it me, and I did eat : " she gave vivacity to the temptation, and efficacy to the argument. And the severity of the man's understanding would have given a reasonable answer to the insinuations of the serpent : that was an ugly beast, and his arguments not being of themselves convincing to a wise person, either must put on advantages of a fair insinuation and representment, or they are returned with scorn. But when the beauteous hands of his young virgin-mistress became the orators,

the temptation was an *amore volezza* ; he kisses the presenter, and hugs the ruin. Here, therefore, it is our safest course, to make a retrenchment of all those excrescences of affections, which, like wild and irregular suckers, draw away nourishment from the trunk, making it as sterile as itself is unprofitable. As we must restrain the inclinations of nature, so also of society and relation when they become inconvenient, and let nothing of our family be so adopted, or naturalized into our affections, as to create within us a new concupiscence, and a second time spoil our nature : what God intended to us for a help, let not our fondnesses convert into a snare ; and he that is not ready to deny the importunities, and to reject the interests, of a wife, or child, or friend, when the question is for God, deserves to miss the comforts of a good, and to feel the troubles of an imperious woman.

6. Thirdly : We also have ends and designs of our own, some great purpose, upon which the greatest part of our life turns ; it may be we are to raise a family, to recover a sunk estate ; or else ambition, honour, or a great employment, is the great hinge of all our greater actions ; and some men are apt to make haste to be rich, or are to pass through a great many difficulties to be honourable : and here the devil will swell the hopes, and obstruct the passages ; he will heighten the desire, and multiply the business of access, making the concupiscence more impatient, and yet the way to the purchase of our purposes so full of employment and variety, that both the implacable desire, and the multitude of changes and transactions, may increase the danger, and multiply the sin. When the enemy hath observed our ends, he makes his temptations to reflect from that angle which is direct upon them, provoking to malice and impatience against whomsoever we find standing in our way, whether willingly or by accident ; then follow naturally all those sins, which are instrumental to removing the impediments, to facilitating the passage, to endearing our friends, to procuring more confidants, to securing our hopes, and entering upon possession. Simon Magus had a desire to be accounted some great one ; and by that purpose he was tempted to sorcery and divination ; and with a new object he brought a new sin into the world, adding simony to his sorcery, and taught posterity that crime, which, till then, had neither name nor being. And those ecclesiastics, who violently affect rich or pompous prelacies, pollute themselves with worldly arts, growing covetous as Syrian merchants, ambitious as the Levantine princes, factious as the people, revengeful as jealousy, and proud as conquerors and usurpers ; and, by this means, beasts are brought into the temple, and the temple itself is exposed to sale, and the holy rites, as well as the beasts of sacrifice, are made venal. To prevent the infinite inconveniences, that thrust themselves into the common and great roads of our life, the best course is to cut our great channel into little rivulets, making our ends the more, that we may be indifferent to any, proposing nothing great, that our desires may be little : for so we shall be better able to digest the troubles of an enemy, the contradictions of an unhandsome accident, the crossing of our hopes ; because our desires are even, and our ends are less considerable, and we can, with much readiness, divert upon another purpose, having another ready with the same proportion to our hopes and desires as the first. Thus, if we propound to ourselves an honest employment or a quiet retirement, a work of charity abroad or of devotion at home, if we miss in our first setting forth, we return to shore, where we can negotiate with content, it being alike to us either to traffic abroad with more gain,

or trade at home with more safety. But when we once grow great in our desires, fixing too earnestly upon one object, we either grow impatient ; as Rachel, " Give me children, or I die : " or take ill courses and use unlawful means ; as Thamar, choosing rather to lie with her father than to die without issue : or else are miserable in the loss and frustration of our hopes : like the women of Ramah, who " would not be comforted. " Let, therefore, our life be moderate, our desires reasonable, our hopes little, our ends none in eminency and prelation above others : for as the rays of light, passing through the thin air, end in a small and undiscerned pyramid, but reflected upon a wall, are doubled, and increase the warmth to a scorching and troublesome heat ; so the desires of man, if they pass through an even and an indifferent life towards the issues of an ordinary and necessary course, they are little, and within command ; but if they pass upon an end or aim of difficulty or ambition, they duplicate, and grow to a disturbance : and we have seen the even and temperate lives of indifferent persons continue in many degrees of innocence ; but the temptation of busy designs is too great, even for the best of dispositions.

7. But these temptations are crasse and material, and soon discernible ; it will require some greater observation to arm against such, as are more spiritual and immaterial. For he hath apples to cozen children, and gold for men ; the kingdoms of the world for the ambition of princes, and the vanities of the world for the intemperate ; he hath discourses and fair-spoken principles to abuse the pretenders to reason, and he hath common prejudices for the more vulgar understandings. Amongst these I choose to consider such, as are by way of principle or proposition.

8. The first great principle of temptation I shall note, is a general mistake, which excuses very many of our crimes upon pretence of infirmity, calling all those sins, to which by natural disposition we are inclined, (though, by carelessness and evil customs, they are heightened to a habit,) by the name of sins of infirmity ; to which men suppose they have reason and title to pretend. If, when they have committed a crime, their conscience checks them, and they are troubled, and, during the interval and abatement of the heats of desire, resolve against it, and commit it readily at the next opportunity ; then they cry out against the weakness of their nature, and think, as long as this body of death is about them, it must be thus, and that this condition may stand with the state of grace : and then the sins shall return periodically, like the revolutions of a quartan ague, well and ill for ever, till death surprises the mistaker.

9. We may lay what load we please upon our nature, and call our violent and unmortified desires by the name of an imperfect grace ; but then we are dangerously mistaken, and flatter ourselves into an opinion of piety, when we are " in the gall of bitterness ; " so making our misery the more certain and irremediable, because we think it needs nothing but a perpetuity and perseverance to bring us to heaven. The violence of passion and desires is a misery of nature, but a perfect principle of sin ; multiplying and repeating the acts, but not lessening the malignity ; but sins of infirmity, when we mean sins of a less and lower malice, are sins of a less and imperfect choice, because of the unavoidable imperfection of the understanding. Sins of infirmity are always infirm sins, that is, weak and imperfect in their principle, and in their nature, and in their design ; that is, they are actions incomplete in all their capacities ; but then passions and periodical inclina-

tions consisting with a regular, and determined, and actual understanding, must never be their principal; for whatsoever proceeds thence, is destructive of spiritual life, and inconsistent with the state of grace.

10. Secondly: Another principle of temptation, pregnant with sin, and fruitful of monsters, is a weaker pretence, which less wary and credulous persons abuse themselves withal, pretending, as a ground for their confidence and incorrigible pursuance of their courses, that they have a good meaning, that they intend sometimes well, and sometimes not ill; and this shall be sufficient to sanctify their actions, and to hallow their sin. And this is of worse malice, when religion is the colour for a war, and the preservation of faith made the warrant for destruction of charity, and a zeal for God made the false light to lead us to disobedience to man, and hatred of idolatry is the usher of sacrilege, and the defiance of superstition the introducer of profaneness, and reformation made the colour for a schism, and liberty of conscience the way to a bold and saucy heresy: for the end may indeed hallow an indifferent action, but can never make straight a crooked and irregular. It was not enough for Saul to cry "For God and the sacrifice," that he spared the fat flocks of Amalek: and it would be a strange zeal and forwardness, that rather than the altar of incense should not smoke, will burn assafoetida, or the marrow of a man's bones. For as God will be honoured by us, so also in ways of his own appointment: for we are the makers of our religion, if we, in our zeal for God, do what he hath forbidden us. * And every sin committed for religion, is just such a violence done to it as it seeks to prevent or remedy.

11. And so it is, if it be committed for an end or pretence of charity as well as of religion. We must be curious, that no pretence engage us upon an action that is certainly criminal in its own nature. Charity may sometimes require our lives, but no obligation can endear a damnation to us; we are not bound to the choice of an eternal ruin, to save another. Indeed, so far as an option will go, it may concern the excrescences of piety to choose, by a tacit or express act of volition, "to become anathema for our brethren," † that is, by putting a case and fiction of law, to suppose it better, and wish it rather, that I should perish than my nation. Thus far is charitable, because it is innocent; for as it is great love to our country, so it is no uncharitableness to ourselves: for such options always are ineffective, and produce nothing but rewards of charity, and a greater glory. And the holy Jesus himself, who only could be, and was, effectively accursed to save us, got by it an exceeding and mighty glorification; and St Paul did himself advantage by his charitable devotion for his countrymen. But since God never puts the question to us, so that either we or our nation must be damned, he having fixed every man's final condition upon his own actions in the virtue and obedience of Christ, if we mistake the expresses of charity, and suffer ourselves to be damned indeed for God's glory, or our brethren's good, we spoil the duty, and ruin ourselves, when our option comes to act. But it is observable, that although religion is often pretended to justify a sin, yet charity is but seldom; which makes it full of suspicion, that religion is but the cover to the death's head, and at the best is but an accusing of God, that he is not willing or not able to preserve religion, without our irregular and impious co-operations. But however,

* 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9.

† Rom. ix. 3.

though it might concern us to wish ourselves rather accursed, than our religion, or our prince, or our country should perish, (for I find no instances, that it is lawful so much as to wish it for the preservation of a single friend;) yet it is against charity to bring such a wish to pass, and, by sin to damn ourselves really for a good end, either of religion or charity.

12. Let us, therefore, serve God, as he hath described the way; for all our accesses to him, being acts of his free concession and grace, must be by his own designation and appointment. We might as well have chosen what shape our bodies should be of, as of what instances the substance of our religion should consist.

13. Thirdly: A third principle of temptation is, an opinion of prosecuting actions of civility, compliance, and society, to the luxation of a point of piety and stricter duty: and good natures, persons of humane and sweeter dispositions, are too apt to dash upon this rock of offence. But the evil that I would note is, that there are some conditions of men, to whom a vice is so accustomed, that he that mingles with them, must handle the crime and touch the venom. There are some vices which are national; there are some that are points of honour; some are civilities of entertainment; and they are therefore accounted unavoidable, because the understandings of men are degenerate as their manners, and it is accounted sottish and fantastical not to communicate in their accustomed loosenesses. Amongst some men all their first addresses are drinkings, their entertainments intemperate beyond the permissions of Christian austerity; their drink is humorous, and their humours quarrelous; and it is dishonourable not to engage in duel, and venture your soul to ascertain an empty reputation. These inconveniences rely upon false opinions and vain fancies, having no greater foundation than the sottish discourses of ignorant and ungodly persons; and they have no peculiar and appropriate remedy, but a resolute severity of manners, and a consideration what is required of us as Christians, to confront against those fonder customs and expectations from us, as we engage in the puddles of the world, and are blended in society.

14. To which purposes we must be careful not to engage too freely in looser company, never without business or unavoidable accidents; and when we mingle in affairs, it will concern our safety to watch, lest multitude of talk, goodness, and facility of nature, the delight of company, and the freedom and ill-customed civilities do, by degrees, draw us away from our guards and retirement of spirit. For in these cases, every degree of dissolution disarms us of our strengths; and if we give way so far as we think it tolerable, we instantly and undiscernibly pass into unlawful and criminal. But our best defences are deposited in a severe and prudent understanding, and discerning the sottishness of such principles, which represent vice in civil language, and propound a crime to you under the cover of kindness; which is just so much recompense, as it is satisfaction to a condemned person, that he was accused by a witty orator, and sentenced by an eloquent judge. Remember always, that "the friendships of the world are enmity with God;" and that those societies, which are combined by relations of drink, and wantonness, and impertinence, and crimes, are either inconsiderable in civility, or reason, or reputation; no wise man is moved by their testimony or discourses; and they are so impotent, rude, and undiscerning a theatre, that most commonly he is the best man, who from thence is the worst reported and represented.

15. But in all the instances of this great evil, the very stating the question right is above half the victory. For it is a question between mistaken civility and certain duty ; piety on one side, and the disguises of humanity on the other. God and man are the parties interested ; and to counterpoise the influence of the sight and face of man, (which being in a visible communication, it is not in some natures to neglect or contradict,) there are all the excellences of God, the effects of his power, his certain presence and omniscience, the severities of his judgment, and the sweetness and invitation of his mercies ; besides the prudence, wisdom, and satisfaction to the spirit, when we wisely neglect such sottish and low abuses and temptations, to conform to the rules of reason and duty, in compliance with the purposes of God and our own felicities.

16. Thirdly : These ill-managed principles are dangers as universal as an infected air ; yet there are some diseases more proper to the particular state of religion. First, to young beginners in religion he represents the difficulties of religion, and propounds the greater examples of holy persons, and affrights them with those mountains of piety ; observing where, and upon what instance of severity, his fancy will be most apprehensive and afflicted : and this he fails not often to represent, with a purpose, that by believing no piety less than the greatest can be good, he may despair of those heights, and retire into the securities and indifferences of a careless life. But this is to be cured by all those instruments of piety, which in special are incentives of the love of God, and endearments of spiritual and religious affections ; and particularly by consideration of the Divine goodness, “ who knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust,” and will require no more of us than according to our powers and present capacities.

17. But most commonly young beginners are zealous and high, and not so easily tempted to a recession, till after a long time, by a revolution of affections, they are abated by a defervescency in holy actions. The devil uses to prompt them on ; not that he loves the piety and the progress, but that he would engage the person in imprudences, and such forwardness of expresses, which either are in their own nature indiscretions, or from which, by reason of the incapacity of the person, it is necessary for him to retire. A new convert is like a bird newly entered into a net, through which possibly she might pass without danger, if her fears and unreasonable strivings did not entangle her ; but when, by busy and disturbed flutterings, she discomposes the order of it, she is entangled and unpenned, and made a prey to her treacherous enemy. Such are the indiscreet strivings, and too forward enterprises of new penitents ; whom we shall observe too often undertaking great austerities, making vows and casting bands upon their liberty, and snares upon their persons ; thinking nothing great enough to expiate their sin, or to present to God, or to endear their services, or secure their perseverance ; and therefore they lay a load of fetters upon themselves, or rather cut off their legs, that they may never go back ; therefore laying an obligation of vows and intolerable burdens on themselves, that by these they may, by a compendium of piety, redeem the time, and by those make it impossible to prevaricate. But the observation of the sad events and final accidents of these men, hath given probation of the indiscretion of such furious addresses and beginnings. And it was prudently done of Meletius of Antioch, when he visited the dioceses of Syria, and the several religious persons famous for severe undertakings ; espying that Sinneon Stylites dwelt

upon a pillar, and had bound his leg with a strong chain of iron, he sent for a smith, causing it to be knocked off, and said, "To a man that loves God, his mind is a sufficient chain." For the loads of voluntary austerities, rashly undertaken, make religion a burden, when their first heats expire; and their vows, which are intended to secure the practice and perpetuate the piety, are but the occasions of an aggravate crime; and the vow does not secure the piety, but the weariness and satiety of the duty tempts to the breaking of the vow, or at least makes the man impatient, when he cannot persist with content, nor retire with safety.

18. It therefore concerns all spiritual guides, to manage their new converts with sober counsels and moderate permissions, knowing that sublime speculations in the metaphysics are not fit entertainment for an infant understanding. There is "milk for babes, and strong meat for men" of riper piety; and it will employ all the regular strength of young beginners to contest against the relics of those mischiefs, which remain since the expulsion of the old man, and to master those difficulties, which, by the nature of the state, are certainly consequent to so late mutation. And if we, by the furies of zeal and the impatience of mistaken piety, are violent and indiscreet in the destroying of our enemies, we probably may tread the thistle down, and trample upon all its appearances, and yet leave the root in the ground, with haste and imprudent forwardness. Gentle and soft counsels are the surest enemies to your vice, and the best conservators and promoters of a virtuous state: but a hasty charge, and the conduct of a young leader, may engage an early spirit in dangers and dishonours. And this temptation is of so much greater danger, because it hath a face of zeal, and meets with all encouragements from without; every man being apt to cherish a convert, and to inflame his new fires: but few consider the inconveniences that are consequent to indiscreet beginnings, and the worse events usually appendant to such inconveniences.

19. Indeed it is not usual, that prudence and a new-kindled zeal meet in the same person: but it will therefore concern the safety of new converts, who cannot guide themselves, to give themselves up to the conduct of an experienced spiritual person, who being disinterested in those heats of the first apprehensions, and being long taught by the observation of the accidents of a spiritual life, upon what rocks rashness and zeal usually do engage us, can best tell what degrees and what instances of religion they may with most safety undertake: but for the general, it is best in the addresses of grace to follow the course of nature; let there be an infancy, and a childhood, and a vigorous youth; and by the divers and distant degrees of increment, let the persons be established in wisdom and grace. But above all things, let them be careful, that they do not lay upon themselves necessities of any lasting course, no vows with perpetuity in any instance of uncommanded action or degree of religion: for he may alter in his capacity and exterior condition; he may see by experience, that the particular engagement is imprudent; he may, by the virtue of obedience, be engaged on a duty inconsistent with the conveniences and advantages of the other; and his very loss of liberty in an uncommanded instance, may tempt him to inconvenience. But then, for the single and transient actions of piety, although in them the danger is less, even though the imprudence be great, yet it were well, if new beginners in religion would attempt a moderate and an even piety, rather than actions of eminence, lest they retire with shame,

and be afflicted with scruple, when their first heats are spent, and expire in weariness and temptation. It is good to keep within the circuits of a man's affections, not stretching out all the degrees of fancy and desire, but leaving the appetites of religion rather unsatisfied, and still desiring more, than by stretching out the whole faculty, leave no desires but what are fulfilled and wearied.

20. Thirdly : I shall not need here to observe such temptations, which are direct invitations to sin, upon occasion of the piety of holy persons ; such as are security, too much confidence, pride, and vanity : these are part of every man's danger, and are to be considered upon their several arguments. Here I was only to note the general instruments of mischief. It remains now, that I speak of such remedies and general antidotes, not which are proportioned to sins in special, but such as are preventions, or remedies, and good advices in general.

21. First : Let every man abstain from all occasions of sin, as much as his condition will permit. And it were better to do some violence to our secular affairs, than to procure apparent or probable danger to our souls. For if we see not a way open and ready prepared to our iniquity, our desires oftentimes are not willing to be troubled, but opportunity gives life and activeness to our appetites. If David had not from his towers beheld the private beauties of Bathsheba, Uriah had lived, and his wife been unattempted ; but sin was brought to him by that chance, and entering at the casements of his eyes, set his heart on fire, and despoiled him of his robes of honour and innocence. The riches of the wedge of gold, and the beauty of the Babylonish garment, made Achan sacrilegious upon the place, who was innocent enough in his preceding purposes : and therefore that soul that makes itself an object to sin, and invites an enemy to view its possessions, and live in the vicinage, loves the sin itself ; and he that is pleased with the danger, would willingly be betrayed into the necessity and the pleasure of the sin : for he can have no other ends to entertain the hazards, but that he hath a farther purpose to serve upon them ; he loves the pleasure of the sin, and therefore he would make the condition of sinning certain and unavoidable. And therefore holy Scripture, which is admirable and curious in the cautions and securities of virtue, does not determine its precepts in the precise commands of virtuous actions, but also binds up our senses, obstructs the passage of temptation, blocks up all the ways and avenues of vice, commanding us "to make a covenant with our eyes ; not to look upon a maid ; not to consider the wine when it sparkles, and gives its colour rightly in the cup ;" but "to set a watch before our mouths, to keep the door of our lips ;" and many more instances to this purpose, that sin may not come so near as to be repulsed : as knowing sin hath then prevailed too far when we give the denial to its solicitations.

22. We read a story of a virtuous lady, that desired of St Athanasius to procure for her, out of the number of the widows fed from the ecclesiastical corban, an old woman, morose, peevish, and impatient ; that she might, by the society of so ungentle a person, have often occasion to exercise her patience, her forgiveness, her charity. I know not how well the counsel succeeded with her ; I am sure it was not very safe : and to invite the trouble, to triumph over it, is to wage a war of an uncertain issue for no end but to get the pleasure of the victory, which oftentimes does not pay

for the trouble, never for the danger. An Egyptian, who acknowledged fire for his god, one day doing his devotions, kissed his god after the manner of worshippers, and burnt his lips. It was not in the power of that false and imaginary deity to cure the real hurt he had done to his devoutest worshipper. Just such a fool is he, that kisses a danger, though with a design of virtue, and hugs an opportunity of sin for an advantage of piety ; he burns himself in the neighbourhood of the flame, and twenty to one but he may perish in its embraces. And he that looks out a danger, that he may overcome it, does as did the Persian, who worshipping the sun, looked upon him, when he prayed him to cure his sore eyes. The sun may as well cure a weak eye, or a great burden knit a broken arm, as a danger can do him advantage, that seeks such a combat which may ruin him, and after which he rarely may have this reward, that it may be said of him, he had the good fortune not to perish in his folly. It is easier to prevent a mischief than to cure it ; and besides the pain of the wound, it is infinitely more full of difficulty to cure a broken leg, which a little care and observation would have preserved whole. To recover from a sin is none of the easiest labours that concern the sons of men ; and therefore it concerns them rather not to enter into such a narrow strait, from which they can never draw back their head, without leaving their hair and skin and their ears behind. If God please to try us, he means us no hurt, and he does it with great reason and great mercy ; but if we go to try ourselves, we may mean well, but not wisely : for as it is simply unlawful for weak persons to seek a temptation, so for the more perfect it is dangerous. We have enemies enough without, and one of our own within : but we become our own tempter, when we run out to meet the world, or invite the devil home, that we may throw holy water upon his flames, and call the danger nearer, that we may run from it. And certainly men are more guilty of many of their temptations than the devil, through their incuriousness or rashness doing as much mischief to themselves as he can : for he can but offer ; and so much we do, when we run into danger. Such were those stories of St Antony provoking the devil to battle. If the stories had been as true as the actions were rash and ridiculous, the story had fastened a note of indiscretion upon that good man ; though now I think, there is nothing but a mark of fiction and falsehood on the writer.

23. Secondly : Possibly without fault we may be engaged in a temptation, but then we must be diligent to resist the first beginnings : for when our strength is yet entire and unabated, if we suffer ourselves to be overcome, and consent to its first and weakest attempts, how shall we be able to resist, when it hath tired our contestation and wearied our patience, when we are weaker and prevailed upon, and the temptation is stronger and triumphant in many degrees of victory ? By how much a hectic fever is harder to be cured than a tertian, or a consumption of the lungs than a little distillation of rheum upon the throat ; by so much is it harder to prevail upon a triumphing lust than upon its first insinuations. But the ways of resisting are of a different consideration, proportionably to the nature of the crimes.

24. First : If the temptation be to crimes of pleasure and sensuality, let the resistance be by flight : for, in case of lust, even to consider the arguments against it is half as great temptation, as to press the arguments for it ; for all considerations of such allurements make the soul perceive

something of its relish, and entertain the fancy. Even the pulling pitch from our clothes defiles the fingers ; and some adherences of pleasant and carnal sins will be remanent even from those considerations, which stay within the circuit of the flames, though but with purpose to quench the fire, and preserve the house.

25. Secondly : If the temptation be to crimes of troublesome and preternatural desires, or intellectual nature, let the resistance be made by a perfect fight, by the amassing of such arguments in general, and remedies in particular, which are apt to become deleteries to the sin, and to abate the temptation. But, in both these instances, the resistance must at least be as soon as the attempt is, lest the violence of the temptation outrun our powers : for if, against our full strength, it hath prevailed to the first degrees, its progress to a complete victory is not so improbable as were its successes at the first beginnings. But to serve this, and all other ends, in the resisting and subduing a temptation, these following considerations have the best and most universal influence.

26. First : " Consideration of the presence of God," who is witness of all our actions, and a revenger of all impiety. This is so great an instrument of fear and of religion, that whoever does actually consider God to be present, and considers what the first consideration signifies, either must be restrained from the present temptation, or must have thrown off all the possibilities and aptnesses for virtue ; such as are modesty, and reverence, and holy fear. For if the face of a man scatters all base machinations, and we dare not act our crimes in the theatre, unless we be impudent as well as criminal ; much more does the sense of a present Deity fill the places of our heart with veneration and the awe of religion, when it is thoroughly apprehended and actually considered. We see not God, " he is not in our thoughts," when we run into darkness to act our impurities. For we dare not commit adultery if a boy be present ; behold, the boy is sent off with an excuse, and God abides there, but yet we commit the crime : it is because, as Jacob said at Bethel, " God was in that place, and we knew not of it ;" and yet we neither breathe, nor move an artery, but in him, and by his assistance ; " In him we live, and move, and have our being." * And, " All things are naked and open in his sight." † " The iniquity of my people is very great ; for they say, The Lord seeth not." ‡ " Shall not he that made the eye, see ?" § " To him the night and day are both alike." ¶ These, and many more to the same design, are the voices of Scripture, that our spirits may retire into the beholding of God, to the purposes of fear and holiness, with whom we do cohabit by the necessities of nature, and the condition of our essence, wholly in dependence ; and then only we may sin securely, when we can contrive to do it so, that God may not see us.

27. There are many men who are " servants of the eyes," as the apostle's phrase is ; who, when they are looked on, act virtue with much pompousness and theatrical bravery ; but these men, when the theatre is empty, put off their upper garment, and retire into their primitive baseness. Diogenes endured the extremity of winter's cold, that the people might wonder at his austerity and philosophical patience ; but Plato, seeing the people admiring the man and pitying the sufferance, told them, that the way to make him warm himself, was for them to be gone and take no notice of

* Acts xvii. 28.

† Heb. iv. 13

‡ Ezek. ix. 9. Jer. xxiii. 24.

§ Psalm xciv. 9.

¶ Psalm cxxxix. 12.

him. For they that walk as in the sight of men, serve that design well enough, when they fill the public voice with noises and opinions, and are not, by their purposes, engaged to act in private ; but they who are servants of the eyes of God, and walk as in the Divine presence, perceive the same restraints in darkness, and closets, and grotts, as in the light and midst of theatres ; and that consideration imposes upon us a happy necessity of doing virtuously, which presents us placed in the eyes of our Judge. And, therefore, it was not unhandsomely said of a Jewish doctor, “ If every man would consider God to be the great eye of the world, watching perpetually over all our actions, and that his hand is indefatigable, and his ear ever open, possibly sin might be extirpated from off the face of the earth.” And this is the condition of beatitude ; and the blessed souls within their regions of light and felicity cannot sin, because of the vision beatifical, they always behold the face of God : and those who partake of this state by way of consideration, which is essential to the condition of the blessed, and derive it into practice and discourse, in proportion to this shall retain an innocence and a part of glory.

28. For it is a great declension of human reason, and a disreputation to our spirits, that we are so wholly led by sense, that we will not walk in the regions of the Spirit, and behold God by our eyes of faith and discourse, suffering our course of life to be guided by such principles, which distinguish our nature from beasts, and our conditions from vicious, and our spirits from the world, and our hopes from the common satisfactions of sense and corruption. The better half of our nature is of the same constitution with that of angels ; and therefore, although we are drenched in matter and the communications of earth, yet our better part was designed to converse with God : and we had, besides the eye of reason, another eye of faith put into our souls, and both clarified with revelations and demonstrations of the Spirit, expressing to us so visible and clear characters of God’s presence, that the expression of the same Spirit is, “ We may feel him, for he is within us,” and about us, and we are in him, and in the comprehensions of his embracings, as birds in the air, or infants in the wombs of their pregnant mothers. And that God is pleased not to communicate himself to the eyes of our body, but still remain invisible, besides that it is his own glory and perfection, it is also no more to us but like a retreat behind a curtain, where, when we know our Judge stands as an espial and a watch over our actions, we shall be sottish, if we dare to provoke his jealousy, because we see him not, when we know that he is close by, though behind the cloud.

29. But then this presence of God must not be a mere speculation of the understanding ; though so only it is of very great benefit and immediate efficacy, yet it must reflect as well from the will as from discourse : and then only we walk in the presence of God, when by faith we behold him present, when we speak to him in frèquent and holy prayers, when we beg aid from him in all our needs, and ask counsel of him in all our doubts, and before him bewail our sins, and tremble at his presence. This is an entire exercise of religion. And beside that the presence of God serves to all this, it hath also especial influence in the disimprovement of temptations, because it hath in it many things contrariant to the nature and efficacy of temptations ; such as are consideration, reverence, spiritual thoughts, and the fear of God : for wherever this consideration is actual, there either God is highly despised, or certainly feared. In this case we are made to declare ; for our

purposes are concealed only in an incuriousness and inconsideration ; but whoever considers God as present, will in all reason, be as religious as in a temple, the reverence of which place custom or religion hath imprinted in the spirits of most men : so that, as Ahasuerus said of Haman, " Will he ravish the queen in my own house ?" aggravating the crime by the incivility of the circumstance ; God may well say to us, whose religion compels us to believe God every-where present ; since the Divine presence hath made all places holy, and every place hath a *Numen* in it, even the eternal God, we unhallow the place, and desecrate the ground whereon we stand, supported by the arm of God, placed in his heart, and enlightened by his eye, when we sin in so sacred a presence.

30. The second great instrument against temptation, is " meditation of death." Raderus reports, that a certain virgin, to restrain the inordination of intemperate desires, which were like thorns in her flesh, and disturbed her spiritual peace, shut herself up in a sepulchre, and for twelve years dwelt in that scene of death. It were good we did so too, making tombs and coffins presential to us by frequent meditation. For God hath given us all a definite arrest in Adam, and from it there lies no appeal ; but it is infallibly and unalterably " appointed for all men once to die," or to " be changed," to pass from hence to a condition of eternity, good or bad. Now, because this law is certain, and the time and the manner of its execution is uncertain, and from this moment eternity depends, and that after this life the final sentence is irrevocable, that all the pleasures here are sudden, transient, and unsatisfying, and vain ; he must needs be a fool, that knows not to distinguish moments from eternity : and since it is a condition of necessity, established by Divine decrees, and fixed by the indispensable laws of nature, that we shall, after a very little duration, pass on to a condition strange, not understood, then unalterable, and yet of great mutation from this, even of greater distance from that in which we are here, than this is from the state of beasts ; this, when it is considered, must, in all reason, make the same impression upon our understandings and affections, which naturally all strange things, and all great considerations, are apt to do ; that is, create resolutions and results passing through the heart of man, such as are reasonable and prudent, in order to our own felicities, that we neglect the vanities of the present temptation, and secure our future condition, which will, till eternity itself expires, remain such as we make it to be by our deportment in this short transition and passage through the world.

31. And that this discourse is reasonable, I am therefore confirmed, because I find it to be to the same purpose used by the Spirit of God, and the wisest personages in the world. " My soul is always in my hand, therefore do I keep thy commandments," * said David : he looked upon himself as a dying person, and that restrained all his inordinations, and so he prayed, " Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom." † And therefore the Egyptians used to serve up a skeleton to their feasts, that the dissolutions and vapours of wine might be restrained with that bunch of myrrh, and the vanities of their eyes chastised by that sad object : for they thought it unlikely a man should be transported far with any thing low or vicious, that looked long and often into the hollow

* Psalm exix. 169.

† Psalm xc. 12.

eye-pits of a death's head, or dwelt in a charnel-house. And such considerations make all the importunity and violence of sensual desires to disband. For when a man stands perpetually at the door of eternity, and, as did John the almoner, every day is building of his sepulchre, and every night one day of our life is gone and passed into the possession of death, it will concern us to take care, that the door leading to hell do not open upon us, that we be not crushed to ruin by the stones of our grave, and that our death become not a consignment of us to a sad eternity. For all the pleasures of the whole world, and in all its duration, cannot make recompense for one hour's torment in hell: and yet if wicked persons were to sit in hell for ever without any change of posture, or variety of torment beyond that session, it were insufferable beyond the endurance of nature: and therefore where little less than infinite misery in an infinite duration shall punish the pleasures of sudden and transient crimes, the gain of pleasure, and the exchange of good here for a condition of eternal and miserable death, is a permutation fit to be made by none but fools and desperate persons, who made no use of a reasonable soul, but that they, in their perishing, might be convinced of unreasonableness, and die by their own fault.

32. The use that wise men have made, when they reduced this consideration to practice, is, to believe every day to be the last of their life, for so it may be, and, for aught we know, it will; and then think what you would avoid, or what you would do, if you were dying, or were to-day to suffer death by sentence and conviction; and that, in all reason, and in proportion to the strength of your consideration, you will do every day. For "that is the sublimity of wisdom, to do those things living, which are to be desired and chosen by dying persons." An alarm of death, every day renewed, and pressed earnestly, will make a man so tame and soft that the precepts of religion will dwell deep in his spirit. But they "that make a covenant with the grave, and put the evil day far from them," they are the men that eat spiders and toads for meat greedily, and a temptation to them is as welcome as joy, and they seldom dispute the point in behalf of piety or mortification: for they that look upon death at a distance, apprehend it not, but in such general lines and great representations that describe it only as future and possible, but nothing of its terrors or affrightments, or circumstances of advantage, are discernible by such an eye, that disturbs its sight, and discomposes the posture, that the object may seem another thing than what it is truly and really. St Austin, with his mother Monica, was led one day by a Roman prætor to see the tomb of Cæsar. Himself thus describes the corpse. "It looked like a blue mould, the bone of the nose laid bare, the flesh of the nether lip quit fallen off, his mouth full of worms, and in his eye-pits two hungry toads feasting upon the remanent portion of flesh and moisture; and so he dwelt in his house of darkness." And if every person, tempted by opportunity, would choose such a room for his privacy, that company for his witness, that object to allay his appetite, he would soon find his spirit more sober, and his desires obedient. I end this with the counsel of St Bernard, "Let every man, in the first address to his actions, consider whether, if he were now to die, he might safely and prudently do such an act, and whether he would not be infinitely troubled that death should surprise him in the present dispositions, and then let him proceed accordingly." For, since "our treasure is in earthen vessels," which may be broken in pieces by the collision of ten thousand accidents, it

were not safe to treasure up wrath in them; for if we do, we shall certainly drink it in the day of recompense.

33. Thirdly: Before, and in, and after all this, the blessed Jesus propounds prayer as a remedy against temptations: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."* For, besides that prayer is the great instrument of obtaining victory by the grace of God, as a fruit of our desires, and of God's natural and essential goodness; the very praying against a temptation, if it be hearty, fervent, and devout, is a denying of it, and part of the victory: for it is a disclaiming the entertainment of it, it is a positive rejection of the crime; and every consent to it is a ceasing to pray, and to desire remedy. And we shall observe, that whensoever we begin to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, our prayers against it lessen, as the consent increases; there being nothing a more direct enemy to the temptation than prayer, which, as it is of itself a professed hostility against the crime, so it is a calling in auxiliaries from above to make the victory more certain. If temptation sets upon thee, do thou set upon God; for he is as soon overcome as thou art, as soon moved to good as thou art to evil; he is as quickly invited to pity thee as thou art to ask him; provided thou dost not finally rest on the petition, but pass into action, and endeavour, by all means human and moral, to quench the flame newly kindled in thy bowels, before it come to devour the marrow of the bones. For a strong prayer, and a lazy, incurious, unobservant walking, are contradictions in the discourses of religion. Thus shall I and you, by God's grace, if we pray earnestly and frequently, if we watch carefully that we be not surprised, if we be not idle in secret, nor talkative in public, if we read the Scriptures, and consult with a spiritual guide, and make religion our work, that serving of God be the business of our life, and our designs be to purchase eternity; then we shall walk safely, or recover speedily, and, by doing advantages to piety, secure a greatness of religion, and spirituality to our spirits and understanding. But remember, that when Israel fought against Amalek, Moses's prayer and Moses's hand secured the victory, his prayer grew ineffectual when his hands were slack; to remonstrate to us, that we must co-operate with the grace of God, praying devoutly, and watching carefully, and observing prudently, and labouring with diligence and assiduity.

THE PRAYER.

ETERNAL and most merciful Father, I adore thy wisdom, providence, and admirable dispensation of affairs in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus, that thou, who art infinitely good, dost permit so many sadnesses and dangers to discompose that order of things and spirits, which thou didst create innocent and harmless, and dost design to great and spiritual perfections; that the emanation of good from evil, by thy overruling power and excellencies, may force glory to thee from our shame, and honour to thy wisdom, by these contradictory accidents and events. Lord have pity upon me in these sad disorders, and with mercy know my infirmities. Let me, by suffering what thou pleatest, co-operate to the glorification of thy grace and magnifying thy mercy; but never let me consent to

* Matt. xxvi. 41.

sin, but, with the power of thy majesty, and mightiness of thy prevailing mercy, rescue me from those throngs of dangers and enemies, which daily seek to deflower that innocence with which thou didst clothe my soul in the new birth. Behold, O God, how all the spirits of darkness endeavour the extinction of our hopes, and the dispersion of all those graces, and the prevention of all those glories, which the holy Jesus hath purchased for every loving and obedient soul. Our very meat and drink are full of poison, our senses are snares, our business is various temptation, our sins are inlets to more, and our good actions made occasions for sins. Lord deliver me from the malice of the devil, from the fallacies of the world, from my own folly; that I be not devoured by the first, nor cheated by the second, nor betrayed by myself: but let thy grace, which is sufficient for me, be always present with me; let thy Spirit instruct me in the spiritual warfare, arming my understanding, and securing my will, and fortifying my spirit with resolutions of piety, and incentives of religion, and deleteries of sin; that the dangers I am encompassed withal, may become unto me an occasion of victory and triumph, through the aids of the Holy Ghost, and by the cross of the Lord Jesus, who hath, for himself and all his servants, triumphed over sin, and hell, and the grave, even all the powers of darkness, from which, by the mercies of Jesus and the merits of his passion, now and ever, deliver me, and all thy faithful people. Amen.

FAITH A PRACTICAL PRINCIPLE.

WE need no trial of our faith, but the examination of our lives. If you “keep the commandments of God,” then have you the faith of Jesus; they are immediate, in St John’s expression: * but if you be importune and ungodly, you are in St Paul’s list, † amongst them that have no faith. Every vice that rules amongst us, and sullies the fair beauty of our souls, is a conviction of infidelity.

For it was the faith of Moses that made him despise the riches of Egypt; the faith of Joshua that made him wax valiant; the faith of Joseph that made him chaste; Abraham’s faith made him obedient; St Mary Magdalen’s faith made her penitent; and the faith of St Paul made him travel so far, and suffer so much, till he became a prodigy, both of zeal and patience. Faith is a catholicon, and cures all the distemperatures of the soul; it “overcomes the world,” ‡ saith St John; it “works righteousness,” § saith St Paul; it “purifies the heart,” || saith St Peter; “it works miracles,” saith our blessed Saviour; miracles in grace always, as it did miracles in nature at its first publication: and whatsoever is good, if it be a grace, it is an act of faith: if it be a reward, it is the fruit of faith. So that as all the actions of man are but the productions of the soul, so are all the actions of the new man the effects of faith. For faith is the life of Christianity, and a good life is the life of faith.

Upon the grounds of this discourse, we may understand the sense of

* Apoc. xiv. 12. † 2 Thess. iii. 2. ‡ 1 John v. 4 § Heb. xi. 33. || Acts xv. 9.

that question of our blessed Saviour: "When the Son of Man comes, shall he find faith on earth?"* Truly, just so much as he finds charity and holy living, and no more. For then only we can be confident, that faith is not "failed from among the children of men," when we feel the heats of the primitive charity return, and the calentures of the first old devotion are renewed; when it shall be accounted honourable to be a servant of Christ, and a shame to commit a sin. Then, and then only, our churches shall be assemblies of the faithful, and the kingdoms of the world Christian countries. But so long as it is notorious, that we have made the Christian religion another thing than what the holy Jesus designed it to be; when it does not make us live good lives, but itself is made a pretence to all manner of impiety, a stratagem to serve ends, the ends of covetousness, of ambition, and revenge; when the Christian charity ends in killing one another for conscience sake, so that faith is made to cut the throat of charity, and our faith kills more than our charity preserves; when the humility of a Christian hath indeed a name amongst us, but it is like a mute person, talked of only; while ambition and rebellion, pride and scorn, self-seeking and proud undertakings, transact most of the great affairs of Christendom; when the custody of our senses is to no other purposes, but that no opportunity of pleasing them pass away; when our oaths are like the fringes of our discourses, going round about them, as if they were ornaments and trimmings; when our blasphemies, profanation, sacrilege, and irreligion, are become scandalous to the very Turks and Jews; while our lusts are always habitual, sometimes unnatural; will any wise man think that we believe those doctrines of humility and obedience, of chastity and charity, of temperance and justice, which the Saviour of the world made sacred by his sermon and example; or, indeed, any thing he either said or did, promised or threatened? For is it possible, a man with his wits about him, and believing that he should certainly be damned, (that is, be eternally tormented, in body and soul, with torments greater than can be in this world,) if he be a swearer, or liar, or drunkard, or cheats his neighbour; that this man should dare to do these things, to which the temptations are so small, in which the delight is so inconsiderable, and the satisfaction so none at all?

We see, by the experience of the whole world, that the belief of an honest man, in a matter of temporal advantage, makes us do actions of such danger and difficulty, that half so much industry and sufferance would ascertain us into a possession of all the promises evangelical. Now, let any man be asked, whether he had rather be rich or be saved? he will tell you, without all doubt, heaven is a better option by infinite degrees; for it cannot be that riches, or revenge, or lust, should be directly preferred; that is, be thought more eligible than the glories of immortality. That, therefore, men neglect so great salvation, and so greedily run after the satisfaction of their baser appetites, can be attributed to nothing but want of faith; they do not heartily believe that heaven is worth so much; there is upon them a stupidity of spirit, and their faith is dull, and its actions suspended most commonly, and often interrupted, and it never enters into the will: so that the propositions are considered nakedly and precisely in themselves, but not as referring to us or our interests; there is nothing of faith in it, but so much as is the first and direct act of understanding; there is no consider-

* Luke xviii. 8.

ation or reflection upon the act, or upon the person, or upon the subject. So that, even as it is seated in the understanding, our faith is commonly lame, mutilous, and imperfect; and therefore much more is it culpable, because it is destitute of all co-operation of the rational appetite.

But let us consider the power and efficacy of worldly belief. If a man believes that there is gold to be had in Peru for fetching, or pearls and rich jewels in India for the exchange of trifles, he instantly, if he be in capacity, leaves the wife of his bosom, and the pretty delights of children, and his own security, and ventures into the dangers of waters and unknown seas, and freezings and calentures, thirst and hunger, pirates and shipwrecks; and hath within him a principle strong enough to answer all objections, because he believes that riches are desirable, and by such means likely to be had. Our blessed Saviour, comparing the Gospel to "a merchantman that found a pearl of great price," and sold "all to buy it," hath brought this instance home to the present discourse. For if we did as verily believe, that in heaven those great felicities, which transcend all our apprehensions, are certainly to be obtained by leaving our vices and lower desires, what can hinder us but we should at least do as much for obtaining those great felicities as for the lesser, if the belief were equal? For if any man thinks he may have them without holiness, and justice, and charity, then he wants faith; for he believes not the saying of St Paul: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall ever see God."* If a man believes learning to be the only or chiefest ornament and beauty of souls, that which will enable him to a fair employment in his own time, and an honourable memory to succeeding ages; this if he believes heartily, it hath power to make him endure catarrhs, gouts, hypochondriacal passions, to read till his eyes almost fix in their orbs, to despise the pleasures of idleness, or tedious sports, and to undervalue whatsoever does not co-operate to the end of his faith, the desire of learning. Why is the Italian so abstemious in his drinkings, or the Helvetian so valiant in his fight, or so true to the prince that employs him, but that they believe it to be noble so to be? If they believed the same, and had the same honourable thoughts of other virtues, they also would be as national as these. For faith will do its proper work. And when the understanding is peremptorily and fully determined upon the persuasion of a proposition, if the will should then dissent, and choose the contrary, it were unnatural and monstrous, and possibly no man ever does so: for that men do things without reason, and against their conscience, is, because they have put out their light, and discourse their wills into the election of a sensible good, and want faith to believe truly all circumstances, which are necessary by way of predisposition, for choice of the intellectual.

But when men's faith is confident, their resolution and actions are in proportion: for thus the faith of Mahometans makes them to abstain from wine for ever; and therefore, if we had the Christian faith, we should much rather abstain from drunkenness for ever; it being an express rule apostolical, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess."† The faith of the Circumcellians made them to run greedily to violent and horrid deaths, as willingly as to a crown; for they thought it was the king's highway to martyrdom. And there was never any man zealous for his religion, and of an

* Heb. xii. 14.

† Ephes. v. 18.

imperious bold faith, but he was also willing to die for it: and therefore, also, by as much reason to live in it, and to be a strict observer of its prescriptions. And the stories of the strict sanctity, and prodigious sufferings, and severe disciplines, and expensive religion, and compliant and laborious charity of the primitive Christians, is abundant argument to convince us, that the faith of Christians is infinitely more fruitful and productive of its univocal and proper issues, than the faith of heretics, or the false religions of misbelievers, or the persuasions of secular persons, or the spirit of anti-christ. And therefore, when we see men serving their prince with such difficult and ambitious services, because they believe him able to reward them, though of his will they are not so certain, and yet so supinely negligent and incurious of their services to God, of whose power and will to reward us infinitely, there is certainty absolute and irrelative; it is certain probation that we believe it not: for if we believe there is such a thing as heaven, and that every single man's portion of heaven is far better than all the wealth in the world, it is morally impossible we should prefer so little before so great profit.

I instance but one more. The faith of Abraham was instanced in the matter of confidence or trust in the Divine promises; and, he being "the father of the faithful," we must imitate his faith by a clear dereliction of ourselves and our own interests, and an entire confident relying upon the Divine goodness, in all cases of our needs or danger. Now, this also is a trial of the verity of our faith, the excellence of our condition, and what title we have to the glorious names of Christians, and faithful, and believers. If our fathers, when we were in pupillage and minority, or a true and an able friend, when we were in need, had made promises to supply our necessities; our confidence was so great, that our care determined. It were also well that we were as confident of God, and as secure of the event, when we had disposed ourselves to reception of the blessing, as we were of our friend or parents. We all profess that God is almighty, that all his promises are certain, and yet, when it comes to a pinch, we find that man to be more confident, that hath ten thousand pounds in his purse, than he that reads God's promises over ten thousand times. "Men of a common spirit," saith St Chrysostom, "of an ordinary sanctity, will not steal, or kill, or lie, or commit adultery; but it requires a rare faith, and a sublimity of pious affections, to believe that God will work a deliverance, which to me seems impossible." And indeed St Chrysostom hit upon the right. He had need be a good man, and love God well, that puts his trust in him. For those we love, we are most apt to trust; and although trust and confidence is sometimes founded upon experience, yet it is also begotten and increased by love, as often as by reason and discourse. And to this purpose it was excellently said by St Basil, "That the knowledge which one man learneth of another, is made perfect by continual use and exercise; but that which, through the grace of God, is engrafted in the mind of man, is made absolute by justice, gentleness, and charity." So that if you are willing, even in death, to confess not only the articles, but in affliction and death to trust the promises; if, in the lowest nakedness of poverty, you can cherish yourselves with the expectation of God's promises and dispensation, being as confident of food and raiment, and deliverance or support, when all is in God's hand, as you are when it is in your own; if you can be cheerful in a storm, smile when the world frowns, be content in the midst of spiritual de-

sertions and anguish of spirit, expecting all should work together for the best, according to the promise ; if you can strengthen yourselves in God when you are weakest, believe when you see no hope, and entertain no jealousies or suspicions of God, though you see nothing to make you confident ; then, and then only, you have faith, which, in conjunction with its other parts, is able to save your souls. For in this precise duty of trusting God, there are the rays of hope, and great proportions of charity and resignation.

The sum is that pious and most Christian sentence of the author of the Ordinary Gloss : “ To believe in God through Jesus Christ, is, by believing to love him, to adhere to him, to be united to him by charity and obedience, and to be incorporated into Christ’s mystical body, in the communion of saints.” I conclude this with a collation of certain excellent words of St Paul, highly to the present purpose : “ Examine yourselves, brethren, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves.”* Well but how ? “ Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?” There is the touchstone of faith. If Jesus Christ dwells in us, then we are true believers ; if he does not, we are reprobates, we have no faith. But how shall we know, whether Christ be in us or no ? St Paul tells us that too : “ If Christ be in you, the body is dead, by reason of sin ; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness.”† That is the Christian’s mark, and the characteristic of a true believer ; a death unto sin, and a living unto righteousness ; a mortified body, and a quickened spirit. This is plain enough ; and by this we see what we must trust to. A man of a wicked life does in vain hope to be saved by his faith ; for indeed his faith is but equivocal and dead, which, as to his purpose is just none at all ; and therefore let him no more deceive himself. For, that I may still use the words of St Paul, “ This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.”‡ For such, and such only, in the great scrutiny for faith in the day of doom, shall have their portion in the bosom of faithful Abraham.

CONSIDERATIONS UPON JESUS’ CONFERENCE WITH THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

WHEN the holy Jesus, perceiving it unsafe to be at Jerusalem, returned to Galilee, where the largest scene of his prophetic office was to be represented, he journeyed on foot through Samaria ; and being weary and faint, hungry and thirsty, he sat down by a well, and begged water of a Samaritan woman that was a sinner ; who at first refused him with some incivility of language. But he, instead of returning anger and passion to her rudeness, which was commenced upon the interest of a mistaken religion, preached the coming of the Messias to her, unlocked the secrets of her heart, and let in his grace, and made “ a fountain of living water to

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. † Rom. viii. 10. ‡ Titus, iii. 8.

spring up" in her soul, to extinguish the impure flames of lust which had set her on fire, burning like hell ever since the death of her fifth husband, she then becoming a concubine to the sixth. Thus Jesus transplanted nature into grace, his hunger and thirst into religious appetites, the darkness of the Samaritan into a clear revelation, her sin into repentance and charity, and so quenched his own thirst by relieving her needs: and as "it was meat to him to do his Father's will," so it was drink to him to bring us to drink of "the fountain of living water." For thus God declared it to be a delight to him to see us live, as if he were refreshed by those felicities which he gives to us as communications of his grace, and instances of mercy, and consignations to heaven. Upon which we can look with no eye but such as sees and admires the excellency of the Divine charity, which, being an emanation from the mercies and essential compassion of eternity, God cannot choose but rejoice in it, and loves the works of his mercy, who was so well pleased in the works of his power. He that was delighted in the creation, was highly pleased in the nearer conveyances of himself, when he sent the holy Jesus to bear his image, and his mercies, and his glories, and offer them to the use and benefit of man. For this was the chief of the works of God, and therefore the blessed Master could not but be highest pleased with it, in imitation of his heavenly Father.

The woman, observing our Saviour to have come with his face from Jerusalem, was angry at him upon the quarrel of the old schism. The Jews and the Samaritans had differing rites, and the zealous persons upon each side did commonly dispute themselves into uncharitableness: and so have Christians upon the same confidence, and zeal, and mistake. For although "righteousness hath no fellowship with unrighteousness, nor Christ with Belial;" yet the consideration of the crime of heresy, which is a spiritual wickedness, is to be separate from the person, who is material. That is, no spiritual communion is to be endured with heretical persons, when it is certain they are such, when they are convinced by competent authority and sufficient argument. But the persons of the men are to be pitied, to be reproved, to be redargued and convinced, to be wrought upon by fair compliances and the offices of civility, and invited to the family of faith by the best arguments of charity, and the instances of a holy life; "having your conversation honest among them, that they may, beholding your good works, glorify God in the day when he shall visit them."* Indeed, if there be danger, that is, if a weak understanding may not safely converse in civil society with a subtle heretic; in such cases they are to be avoided,† not saluted.

But excepting these cases, which are not to be judged with forwardness, nor rashly taken measure of, we find that conversing charitably with persons of differing persuasions, hath been instrumental to their conversion, and God's glory. "The believing wife" may "sanctify the unbelieving husband;" and we find it verified in church story. St Cecily converted her husband Falerianus; St Theodora converted Sisinius; St Monica converted Patricius, and Theodelinda Agilulphus; St Clotilda persuaded king Clodoveus to be a Christian; and St Natolia, persuaded Adrianus to be a martyr. For they, having their conversation honest and holy amongst the unbelievers, shined like virgin-tapers in the midst of an impure prison,

* 1 Pet. ii. 12.

† Tit. iii. 10. 2 Epist. John x.

and amused the eyes of the sons of darkness with the brightness of the flame. For the excellency of a holy life is the best argument of the inhabitation of God within the soul : and who will not offer up his understanding upon that altar, where a deity is placed as the president and author of religion ? And this very intercourse of the holy Jesus with the woman is abundant argument, that it were well we were not so forward to refuse communion with dissenting persons, upon the easy and confident mistakes of a too forward zeal. They that call heretic may themselves be the mistaken persons, and by refusing to communicate the civilities of hospitable entertainment, may shut their doors upon truth, and their windows against light, and refuse to let salvation in. For sometimes ignorance is the only parent of our persuasions, and many times interest hath made an impure commixture with it, and so produced the issue.

The holy Jesus gently insinuates his discourses. "If thou hadst known who it is that asks of thee water, thou wouldst have asked water of him." Oftentimes we know not the person that speaks, and we usually choose our doctrine by our affections to the man : but then, if we are uncivil upon the stock of prejudice, we do not know that it is Christ that calls our understandings to obedience, and our affections to duty and compliances. The woman little thought of the glories which stood right against her. He that sat upon the well, had a throne placed above the heads of cherubims. In his arms, who there rested himself, was the sanctuary of rest and peace, where wearied souls were to lay their heads, and dispose their cares, and there to turn them into joys, and to gild their thorns with glory. That holy tongue, which was parched with heat, streamed forth rivulets of holy doctrine, which were to water all the world, to turn our deserts into paradise. And though he begged water at Jacob's well, yet Jacob drank at his : for at his charge all Jacob's flocks and family were sustained, and by him Jacob's posterity were made honourable and redeemed. But because this well was deep, and the woman "had nothing to draw water with," and of herself could not fathom so great a depth, therefore she refused him ; just as we do, when we refuse to give drink to a thirsty disciple. Christ comes in that humble manner of address, under the veil of poverty or contempt, and we cannot see Christ from under that robe, and we send him away without an alms ; little considering, that when he begs an alms of us in the instance of any of his poor relatives, he asks of us but to give him occasion to give a blessing for an alms. Thus do the ministers of religion ask support ; but when the laws are not more just than many of the people are charitable, they shall fare as their Master did ; they shall preach, but, unless they can draw water themselves, they shall not drink ; but, if men did but know who it is that asks them, that it is Christ, either in his ministers, or Christ in his poor servants, certainly they could not be so obstructed in the issues of their justice and charity, but would remember that no honour could be greater, no love more fortunate, than to meet with an opportunity to be expressed in so noble a manner, that God himself is pleased to call his own relief.

When the disciples had returned from the town, whither they went to buy provision, they "wondered to see" the Master "talking" alone "with a woman." They knew he never did so before ; they had observed him to be of a reserved deportment, and not only innocent, but secure from the dangers of malice and suspicion in the matter of incontinence. The Jews were a jealous and froward people : and as nothing

will more blast the reputation of a prophet than effeminacy and wanton affections ; so he knew no crime was sooner objected, or harder cleared, than that. Of which, because commonly it is acted in privacy, men look for no probation, but pregnant circumstances and arguments of suspect : so nothing can wash it off, until a man can prove a negative ; and if he could, yet he is guilty enough in the estimate of the vulgar for having been accused. But then, because nothing is so destructive of the reputation of a governor, so contradictory to the authority and dignity of his person, as the low and baser appetites of uncleanness, and the consequent shame and scorn, (insomuch that David, having fallen into it, prayed God to confirm or establish him with a " free spirit," the spirit of a prince, the spirit of lust being uningenious and slavish,) the holy Jesus, who was to establish a new law in the authority of his person, was highly curious so to demean himself, that he might be a person incapable of any such suspicions, and of a temper apt not only to answer the calumny, but also to prevent the jealousy. But yet, now he had a great design in hand, he meant to reveal to the Samaritans the coming of the Messias ; and to this, his discourse with the woman was instrumental. And, in imitation of our great Master, spiritual persons and the guides of others, have been very prudent and reserved in their societies and intercourse with women. Holy persons, preachers of true religion and holy doctrines, although they were careful, by public homilies, to instruct the female disciples, that they who are heirs together with us of the same hope, may be servants in the same discipline and institution ; yet they remitted them to " their husbands" and guardians to be " taught at home." * And when any personal transactions concerning the needs of their spirit were, of necessity, to intervene between the priest and a woman, the action was done most commonly under public test ; or if in private, yet with much caution and observation of circumstance, which might as well prevent suspicion as preserve their innocence. Conversation, and frequent and familiar address, does too much rattle the ligaments and reverence of spiritual authority, and, amongst the best persons, is matter of danger. When the cedars of Libanus have been observed to fall, when David and Solomon have been dishonoured, he is a bold man that will venture farther than he is sent in errand by necessity, or invited by charity, or warranted by prudence. Yet it were a jealousy beyond the suspicion of monks, to think it impossible to have a chaste conversation with a distinct sex. 1. A pure and right intention, 2. an intercourse not extended beyond necessity or holy ends, 3. a short stay, 4. great modesty, 5. and the business of religion, will, by God's grace, hallow the visit, and preserve the friendship in its being spiritual, that it may not degenerate into carnal affection. And yet, these are only advices useful when there is danger in either of the persons, or some scandal incident to the profession, that to some persons, and in the conjunction of many circumstances, are oftentimes not considerable.

When Jesus had resolved to reveal himself to the woman, he first gives her occasion to reveal herself to him, fairly insinuating an opportunity to confess her sins, that, having purged herself from her impurity, she might be apt to entertain the article of the revelation of the Messias. And indeed a crime in our manners is the greatest indisposition of our understanding to entertain the truth and doctrine of the Gospel : especially when

* 1 Cor. xiv. 35.

the revelation contests against the sin, and professes open hostility to the lust. For faith being the gift of God, and an illumination, the Spirit of God will not give this light to them that prefer their darkness before it ; either the will must open the windows, or the light of faith will not shine into the chamber of the soul. "How can ye believe," said our blessed Saviour, "that receive honour one of another?"* Ambition and faith, believing God, and seeking of ourselves, are incompetent, and totally impossible. And therefore Serapion, bishop of Thmuis, spake like an angel, (saith Socrates,) saying, "that the mind, which feedeth upon spiritual knowledge, must thoroughly be cleansed. The irascible faculty must first be cured with brotherly love and charity, and the concupiscible must be suppressed with continency and mortification." Then may the understanding apprehend the mysteriousness of Christianity. For, since Christianity is a holy doctrine, if there be any remanent affections to a sin, there is in the soul a party disaffected to the entertainment of the institution, and we usually believe what we have a mind to : our understandings, if a crime be lodged in the will, being like icterical eyes, transmitting the species to the soul with prejudice, disaffection, and colours of their own framing. If a preacher should discourse, that there ought to be a parity amongst Christians, and that their goods ought to be in common, all men will apprehend, that not princes and rich persons, but the poor and the servants, would soonest become disciples, and believe the doctrines, because they are the only persons likely to get by them ; and it concerns the other not to believe him, the doctrine being destructive of their interests. Just such a persuasion is every persevering love to a vicious habit ; it having possessed the understanding with fair opinions of it, and surprised the will with passions and desires, whatsoever doctrine is its enemy will with infinite difficulty be entertained. And we know a great experience of it, in the article of the Messiah dying on the cross, which, though infinitely true, yet, because "to the Jews it was a scandal, and to the Greeks foolishness," it could not be believed, they remaining in that indisposition ; that is, unless the will were first set right, and they willing to believe any truth, though for it they must disclaim their interest : their understanding was blind, because the heart was hardened, and could not receive the impression of the greatest moral demonstration in the world.

The holy Jesus asked water of the woman, unsatisfying water ; but promised that himself, to them that ask him, would give waters of life, and satisfaction infinite ; so distinguishing the pleasures and appetites of this world from the desires and complacencies spiritual. Here we labour, but receive no benefit ; we sow many times, and reap not ; or reap, and do not gather in ; or gather in, and do not possess ; or possess, but do not enjoy ; or if we enjoy, we are still unsatisfied, it is with anguish of spirit, and circumstances of vexation. A great heap of riches makes neither our clothes warm, nor our meat more nutritive, nor our beverage more pleasant ; and it feeds the eye, but never fills it, but, like drink to an hydropic person, increases the thirst, and promotes the torment. But the grace of God, though but like a grain of mustard seed, fills the furrows of the heart ; and as the capacity increases, itself grows up in equal degrees, and never suffers any emptiness or dissatisfaction, but carries content and fulness all the way ; and

* John v. 14.

the degrees of augmentation are not steps and near approaches to satisfaction, but increasings of the capacity ; the soul is satisfied all the way, and receives more, not because it wanted any, but that it can now hold more, is more receptive of felicities : and in every minute of sanctification there is so excellent a condition of joy and high satisfaction, that the very calamities, the afflictions, and persecutions of the world, are turned into felicities by the activity of the prevailing ingredient ; like a drop of water falling into a tun of wine, it is ascribed into a new family, losing its own nature by a conversion into the more noble. For now that all passionate desires are dead, and there is nothing remanent that is vexatious, the peace, the serenity, the quiet sleeps, the evenness of spirit, and contempt of things below, remove the soul from all neighbourhood of displeasure, and place it at the foot of the throne, whither when it is ascended, it is possessed of felicities eternal. These were the waters which were given to us to drink, when, with the rod of God, the rock Christ Jesus was smitten : the Spirit of God moves for ever upon these waters ; and when the angel of the covenant hath stirred the pool, whoever descends hither shall find health and peace, joys spiritual, and the satisfactions of eternity.

ON THE EIGHT BEATITUDES.

THE eight beatitudes, which are the duty of a Christian and the rule of our spirit, and the special discipline of Christ, seem like so many paradoxes and impossibilities reduced to reason ; and are indeed virtues made excellent by rewards, by the sublimity of grace, and the mercies of God, hallowing and crowning those habits which are despised by the world, and are esteemed the conditions of lower and less considerable people. But God “sees not as man sees,” and his rules of estimate and judgment are not borrowed from the exterior splendour, which is apt to seduce children, and cozen fools, and please the appetites of sense and abused fancy ; but they are such as he makes himself, excellencies which, by abstractions and separations from things below, land us upon celestial appetites. And they are states of suffering rather than states of life : for the great employment of a Christian being to bear the cross, Christ laid the pedestal so low, that the rewards were like rich mines interred in the deeps and inaccessible retirements, and did choose to build our felicities upon the torrents and violences of affliction and sorrow. Without these graces we cannot get heaven ; and without sorrow and sad accidents, we cannot exercise these graces. Such are,

First : “Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Poverty of spirit is in respect of secular affluence and abundance, or in respect of great opinion and high thoughts ; either of which have divers acts and offices. That the first is one of the meanings of this text is certain, because St Luke, repeating this beatitude, delivers it plainly “Blessed are the poor,”* and to it he opposes riches. And our blessed Saviour † speaks so suspiciously of riches and rich men, that he represents

* Luke vi. 20.

† Luke vi. 24.

the condition to be full of danger and temptation : and St James * calls it full of sin ; describing rich men to be oppressors, litigious, proud, spiteful, and contentious ; which sayings, like all others of that nature, are to be understood in common and most frequent accidents, not regularly, but very improbable to be otherwise. For if we consider our vocation, St Paul informs us, that “ not many mighty, not many noble, are called ;” but “ God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith :” And how “ hard it is for a rich man to enter into heaven,” our great Master hath taught us, by saying, “ It is more easy for a camel to pass through a needle’s eye.” And the reason is, because of the infinite temptation which riches minister to our spirits ; it being such an opportunity of vices, that nothing remains to countermand the act, but a strong, resolute, unaltered, and habitual purpose, and pure love of virtue ; riches, in the mean time, offering to us occasions of lust, fuel for revenge, instruments of pride, entertainment of our desires, engaging them in low, worldly, and sottish appetites, inviting us to show our power in oppression, our greatness in vanities, our wealth in prodigal expenses, and to answer the importunity of our lusts not by a denial, but by a correspondence and satisfaction, till they become our mistresses, imperious, arrogant, tyrannical, and vain. But poverty is the sister of a good mind ; it ministers aid to wisdom, industry to our spirit, severity to our thoughts, soberness to counsels, modesty to our desires ; it restrains extravagancy and dissolution of appetites ; the next thing above our present condition, which is commonly the object of our wishes, being temperate and little proportionable enough to nature, not wandering beyond the limits of necessity or a moderate conveniency, or at farthest, but to a free refreshment and recreation. And the cares of poverty are single and mean, rather a fit employment to correct our levities, than a business to impede our better thoughts ; since a little thing supplies the needs of nature, and the earth and the fountain with little trouble minister food to us, and God’s common providence and daily dispensation eases the cares, and makes them portable. But the cares and businesses of rich men are violences to our whole man ; they are loads of memory business for the understanding, work for two or three arts and sciences, employment for many servants to assist in, increase the appetite, and heighten the thirst ; and by making their dropsy bigger, and their capacities large, they destroy all those opportunities and possibilities of charity, in which only riches can be useful.

But it is not a mere poverty of possession which entitles us to the blessing, but a poverty of spirit ; that is a contentedness in every state, an aptness to renounce all when we are obliged in duty, a refusing to continue a possession, when we for it must quit a virtue or a noble action, a divorce of our affections from those gilded vanities, a generous contempt of the world ; and at no hand heaping riches, either with injustice or with avarice, either with wrong or impotency, of action or affection. Not like Laberius, described by the poet, who thought nothing so criminal as poverty, and every spending of a sesterce was the loss of a moral virtue, and every gaining of a talent was an action glorious and heroical. But poverty of spirit accounts riches to be the servants of God first, and then of ourselves, being sent by God, and to return when he pleases, and all the while they are with us to do his business. It is a looking upon riches and things of the

* James ii. 6, &c. v. 1. &c.

earth, as they do who look upon it from heaven, to whom it appears little and unprofitable. And because the residence of this blessed poverty is in the mind, it follows that it be here understood, that all that exinanition and renunciation, abjection and humility of mind, which depauperates the spirit, making it less worldly and more spiritual, is the duty here enjoined. For if a man throws away his gold, as did Crates the Theban, or the proud philosopher Diogenes, and yet leaves a spirit high, airy, fantastical, and vain, pleasing himself, and with complacency reflecting upon his own act, his poverty is but a circumstance of pride, and the opportunity of an imaginary and a secular greatness. Ananias and Sapphira renounced the world by selling their possessions; but because they were not "poor in spirit," but still retained their affections to the world, therefore they "kept back part of the price," and lost their hopes. The church of Laodicea * was possessed with a spirit of pride, and flattered themselves in imaginary riches; they were not poor in spirit, but they were poor in possession and condition. These wanted humility, the other wanted a generous contempt of worldly things; and both were destitute of this grace.

The acts of this grace are: 1. To cast off all inordinate affection to riches. 2. In heart and spirit, that is, preparation of mind, to quit the possession of all riches and actually so to do when God requires it, that is when the retaining riches loses a virtue. 3. To be well pleased with the whole economy of God, his providence and dispensation of all things, being contented in all estates. 4. To employ that wealth God hath given us, in actions of justice and religion. 5. To be thankful to God in all temporal losses. 6. Not to distrust God, or be solicitous and fearful of want in the future. 7. To put off the spirit of vanity, pride, and fantastic complacency in ourselves, thinking lowly or meanly of whatsoever we are or do. 8. To prefer others before ourselves, doing honour and prelation to them, and either contentedly receiving affronts done to us, or modestly undervaluing ourselves. 9. Not to praise ourselves but when God's glory and the edification of our neighbour is concerned in it, nor willingly to hear others praise us. 10. To despoil ourselves of all interior propriety, denying our own will in all instances of subordination to our superiors, and our own judgment in matters of difficulty and question, submitting ourselves and our affairs to the advice of wiser men, and the decision of those who are trusted with the cure of our souls. 11. Emptying ourselves of ourselves, and throwing ourselves wholly upon God, relying upon his providence, trusting his promises, craving his grace, and depending upon his strength for all our actions, and deliverances, and duties.

The reward promised is the kingdom of heaven. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom." To be little in our own eyes is to be great in God's; the poverty of the spirit shall be rewarded with the riches of the kingdoms, of both kingdoms: † that of heaven is expressed. Poverty is the highway of eternity. But, therefore, the kingdom of grace is taken in the way, the way to our country; and it, being the forerunner of glory, and nothing else but an antedated eternity, is part of the reward as well as of our duty. And, therefore, whatsoever is signified by kingdom, in the appropriate evangelical sense, is there intended as a recompense. For the kingdom of the Gospel is a congregation

* Apocal. iii. 17.

† Matt. xi. 11. and xviii. 4.

and society of Christ's poor, of his "little ones:" they are the communion of saints, and their present entertainment is knowledge of the truth, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and what else in Scripture is signified to be a part of grace, or condition of the kingdom. For "to the poor the Gospel is preached;"* that is, to the poor the kingdom is promised and ministered.

Secondly: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." This duty of Christian mourning is commanded not for itself, but in order to many good ends. It is in order to patience: "Tribulation worketh patience;" and therefore "we glory in them," saith St Paul and St James. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith (viz. by afflictions) worketh patience."† 2. It is in order to repentance: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance."‡ By consequence it is in order to pardon; for a "contrite heart God will not reject." And after all this it leads to joy; and therefore St James preached a homily of sorrow: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep," that is, in penitential mourning; for he adds "humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."§ The acts of this duty are: 1. To bewail our own sins. 2. To lament our infirmities, as they are principles of sin, and recessions from our first state. 3. To weep for our own evils and sad accidents, as they are issues of the Divine anger. 4. To be sad for the miseries and calamities of the church, or of any member of it: and, indeed, to "weep with every one that weeps;" that is, not to rejoice in his evil, but to be compassionate, and pitiful, and apt to bear another's burden. 5. To avoid all loose and immoderate laughter, all dissolution of spirit and manners, uncomely jestings, free revelings, carnivals, and balls, which are the perdition of precious hours (allowed us for repentance and possibilities of heaven), which are the instruments of infinite vanity, idle talking, impertinency, and lust, and very much below the severity and retiredness of a Christian spirit. Of this, Christ became to us the great example; for St Basil reports a tradition of him, that he never laughed, but wept often. And if we mourn with him, we also shall rejoice in the joys of eternity.

Thirdly: "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the earth;" that is, the gentle and softer spirits, persons not turbulent or unquiet, not clamorous or impatient, not over-bold or impudent, not querulous or discontented, not brawlers or contentious, not nice or curious, but men who submit to God, and know no choice of fortune or employment or success, but what God chooses for them, having peace at home, because nothing from without does discompose their spirit. In some, meekness is an indifference to any exterior accident, a being reconciled to all conditions and instances of Providence, a reducing ourselves to such an evenness and interior satisfaction, that there is the same conformity of spirit and fortune by complying with my fortune, as if my fortune did comply with my spirit. And, therefore, in the order of beatitudes, meekness is set between mourning and desire, that it might balance and attemper those actions by indifference, which, by reason of their abode, are apt to the transportation of passion. The reward expressed is "a possession of the earth," that is, a possession of all which is excellent here below, to consign him to a future glory as Canaan was a type of heaven. For meekness is the best cement

* Mat. xi. 5. 10.

† James, i. 2, 3.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

§ James iv. 10.

and combining of friendships, it is a great endearment of us to our company. It is an ornament to have "a meek and quiet spirit,"* a prevention of quarrels, and pacifier of wrath; it purchaseth peace, and is itself a quietness of spirit; it is the greatest affront to all injuries in the world; for it returns them upon the injurious, and makes them useless, ineffective, and innocent; and is an antidote against all the evil consequents of anger and adversity, and tramples upon the usurping passions of the irascible faculty.

But the greatest part of this paysage and landscape is sky; and as a man, in all countries, can see more of heaven than of the earth he dwells on; so also he may in this promise. For although the Christian hears the promise of "the inheritance of the earth," yet he must place his eye, and fix his heart, upon heaven, which, by looking downward also upon this promise, as in a vessel of limpid water, he may see by reflection, without looking upwards by a direct intuition. It is heaven that is designed by this promise, as well as by any of the rest; though this grace takes in also the refreshments of the earth by equivalence, and a suppletory design. But "here we have no abiding city," and therefore, no inheritance; this is not our country, and therefore here cannot be our portion; unless we choose, as did the prodigal, to go into a strange country, and spend our portion with riotous and beastly living, and forfeit our Father's blessing. The devil, carrying our blessed Saviour to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world; but, besides that they were offered upon ill conditions, they were not eligible by him upon any. And neither are they to be chosen by us for our inheritance and portion evangelical: for the Gospel is founded upon "better promises," and therefore, the hopes of a Christian ought not to determine upon any thing less than heaven. Indeed our blessed Saviour chose to describe this beatitude in the words of the Psalmist, so inviting his disciples to an excellent precept, by the insinuation of those Scriptures which themselves admitted. But as the earth, which was promised to the meek man in David's psalm, was no other earth but the earth of promise, the land of Canaan; if we shall remember that this land of promise was but a transition and an allegory to a greater and more noble, that it was but a type of heaven, we shall not see cause to wonder why the holy Jesus, intending heaven for the reward of this grace also, together with the rest, did call it "the inheritance of the earth." For now is revealed to us "a new heaven and a new earth, an habitation made without hands, eternal in the heavens." And he understands nothing of the excellence of the Christian religion, whose affections dwell below, and are satisfied with a portion of dirt and corruption. "If we be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." But if a Christian desires to take possession of this earth in his way, as his inheritance or portion, he hath reason to fear it will be his all. We have but one inheritance, one country; and here we are "strangers and pilgrims." Abraham told Dives that he had "enjoyed his good things here;" he had "the inheritance of the earth," in the crass material sense; and, therefore, he had no other portion but what the devils have. And when we remember that persecution is the lot of the church, and that poverty is her portion, and her quantum is but "food and rai-

* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

ment" at the best, and that patience is her support, and hope her refreshment, and self-denial her security, and meekness is all her possession and title to a subsistence; it will appear certain, that as Christ's "kingdom was not of this world," so neither shall his saints have their portion in that which is not his kingdom. They are miserable if they do not reign with him, and he never reigned here; but "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him" hereafter. True it is, Christ promised to him that should lose any interest for his sake, the restitution of "a hundred fold in this world." But as the sense of that cannot be literal, for he cannot receive a hundred mothers or a hundred wives; so whatsoever that be, it is to be enjoyed "with persecution." And then such a portion of the earth as Christ hath expressed in figure, and shall, by way of recompense, restore us, and such a recompense as we can enjoy with persecution, and such an enjoyment as is consistent with our having lost all our temporals, and such an acquist and purchase of it as is not destructive of the grace of meekness; all that we may enter into our accounts as part of our lot, and the emanation from the holy promise. But in the foot of this account we shall not find any great affluence of temporal accrements. However it be, although when a meek man hath earthly possessions, by this grace he is taught how to use them, and how to part with them; yet if he hath them not, by the virtue here commanded, he is not suffered to use any thing violent towards the acquiring them, not so much as a violent passion, or a stormy imagination; for then he loses his meekness, and whatever he gets can be none of the reward of this grace. He that fights for temporals (unless by some other appendant duty he be obliged,) loses his title, by striving incompetently for the reward; he cuts off that hand by which alone he can receive it. For unless he be indeed meek, he hath no right to what he calls "the inheritance of the earth;" and he that is not content to want the inheritance of the earth when God requires him, is not meek. So that if this beatitude be understood in a temporal sense, it is an offer of a reward upon a condition we shall have without it, and be content too: for, in every sense of the word, meekness implies a just satisfaction of the spirit, and acquiescence in every estate or contingency whatsoever, though we have no possessions but of a good conscience, no bread but that of carefulness, no support but from the Holy Spirit, and a providence ministering to our natural necessities, by an extemporary provision. And certain it is, the meekest of Christ's servants, the apostles and the primitive Christians, had no other verification of this promise but this, that "rejoicing in tribulation, and knowing how to want, as well as how to abound, through many tribulations they entered into the kingdom of heaven:" for that is the country in which they are co-heirs with Jesus. But if we will certainly understand what this reward is, we may best know it by understanding the duty; and this we may best learn from him that gave it in commandment. "Learn of me, for I am meek," said the holy Jesus: and to him was promised, that "the uttermost ends of the earth should be his inheritance;" and yet he died first, and went to heaven, before it was verified to him in any sense, but only of content, and desire, and joy in suffering, and in all variety of accident. And thus also if we be meek, we may receive the inheritance of the earth.

The acts of this grace are: 1. To submit to all the instances of Divine providence, not repining at any accident which God hath chosen for

us, and given us as part of our lot, or a punishment of our deserving, or an instrument of virtue; not envying the gifts, graces, or prosperities of our neighbours. 2. To pursue the interest and employment of our calling in which we are placed, not despising the meanness of any work, though never so disproportionable to our abilities. 3. To correct all malice, wrath, evil-speaking, and inordinations of anger, whether in respect of the object or the degree. 4. At no hand to entertain any thoughts of revenge or retaliation of evil. 5. To be affable and courteous in our deportment towards all persons of our society and intercourse. 6. Not to censure or reproach the weakness of our neighbour, but support his burden, cover and cure his infirmities. 7. To excuse what may be excused, lessening severity, and being gentle in reprehension. 8. To be patient in afflictions, and thankful under the cross. 9. To endure reproof, with shame at ourselves for deserving it, and thankfulness to the charitable physician that offers the remedy. 10. To be modest and fairly mannered toward our superiors, obeying, reverencing, speaking honourably of, and doing honour to aged persons, and all whom God hath set over us, according to their several capacities. 11. To be ashamed and very apprehensive of the unworthiness of a crime; at no hand losing our fear of the invisible God, and our reverence to visible societies, or single persons. 12. To be humble in our exterior addresses and behaviour in churches and all holy places. 13. To be temperate in government, not imperious, unreasonable, insolent, or oppressive, lest we provoke to wrath those whose interest of person and of religion we are to defend or promote. 14. To do our endeavour to expiate any injury we did, by confessing the fact, and offering satisfaction, and asking forgiveness.

Fourthly: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." This grace is the greatest indication of spiritual health, when our appetite is right, strong, and regular; when we are desirous of spiritual nourishment, when we long for manna, and "follow Christ for loaves," not of a low and terrestrial gust, but of that "bread which came down from heaven." Now there are two sorts of holy repast which are the proper objects of our desires. The bread of heaven, which is proportioned to our hunger; that is, all those immediate emanations from Christ's pardon of our sins, and redemption from our former conversation, holy laws, and commandments. To this food there is also a spiritual beverage to quench our thirst: and this is the effects of the Holy Spirit, who first "moved upon the waters" of baptism, and afterwards became to us "the breath of life," giving us holy inspirations and assistances, refreshing our wearinesses, cooling our fevers, and allaying all our intemperate passions, making us holy, humble, resigned, and pure, "according to the pattern in the mount," even "as our Father is pure." So that the first redemption and pardon of us by Christ's merits is the bread of life, for which we must hunger; and the refreshments and daily emanations of the Spirit, who is the spring of comforts and purity, is that drink which we must thirst after: a being first reconciled to God by Jesus, and a being sanctified and preserved in purity by the Holy Spirit, is the adequate object of our desires. Some to hunger and thirst best fancy the analogy and proportion of the two sacraments, the waters of baptism, and the food of the eucharist: some, the bread of the paten, and the wine of the chalice. But it is certain they signify one desire, expressed by the most impatient

and necessary of our appetites, hungering and thirsting. And the object is whatsoever is the principle or the effect, the beginning, or the way, or the end of righteousness; that is, the mercies of God, the pardon of Jesus, the graces of the Spirit, a holy life, and a holy death, and a blessed eternity.

The blessing and reward of this grace is fulness or satisfaction: which relates immediately to heaven, because nothing here below can satisfy us. The grace of God is our viaticum, and entertains us by the way; its nature is to increase, not to satisfy the appetites: not because the grace is empty and unprofitable, as are the things of the world; but because it is excellent, but yet in order to a greater perfection; it invites the appetite by its present goodness, but it leaves it unsatisfied, because it is not yet arrived at glory: and yet the present imperfection in respect of all the good of this world's possession, is rest and satisfaction, and is imperfect only in respect of its own future complement and perfection; and our hunger continues, and our needs return, because all we have is but an antepast. But the glories of eternity are also the proper object of our desires; that is the reward of God's grace, this is "the crown of righteousness." "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it."* The acts of this virtue are multiplied according to its object; for they are only, 1. to desire, and 2. pray for, and 3. labour, for all that which is righteousness in any sense: 1. for the pardon of our sins; 2. for the graces and sanctification of the Spirit; 3. for the advancement of Christ's kingdom; 4. for the reception of the holy sacrament, and all the instruments, ordinances, and ministries of grace; 5. for the grace of perseverance; 6. and finally, for the crown of righteousness.

Fifthly: "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." Mercy is the greatest mark and token of the holy, elect, and predestinate persons in the world. "Put ye on, my beloved, as the elect of God, the bowels of mercy, holy and precious."† For mercy is an attribute, in the manifestation of which as all our happiness consists, so God takes greatest complacency and delights in it above all his other works. "He punishes to the third and fourth generation, but shows mercy unto thousands." Therefore the Jews say, that Michael flies with one wing, and Gabriel with two; meaning, that the pacifying angel, the minister of mercy, flies swift, but the exterminating angel, the messenger of wrath, is slow. And we are called to our approximation to God by the practice of this grace: we are made "partakers of the Divine nature" by being "merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful." This mercy consists in the affections, and in the effects and actions. In both which the excellence of this Christian precept is eminent above the goodness of the moral precept of the old philosophers, and the piety and charity of the Jews by virtue of the Mosaic law. The Stoic philosophers affirm it to be the duty of a wise man to succour and help the necessities of indigent and miserable persons; but at no hand to pity them, or suffer any trouble or compassion in our affections: for they intended that a wise person should be dispassionate, unmoved, and without disturbance in every accident, and object, and concernment. But the blessed Jesus, who came to reconcile us to his Father, and purchase us an

* Psalm xvii. 15.

† Col. iii. 12.

entire possession, did intend to redeem us from sin, and make our passions obedient and apt to be commanded, even and moderate in temporal affairs, but high and active in some instances of spiritual concernment; and in all instances, that the affection go along with the grace; that we must be as merciful in our compassion, as compassionate in our exterior expressions and actions. The Jews, by the prescript of their law, were to be merciful to all their nation and confederates in religion; and this their mercy was called justice: "He hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor, his righteousness (or justice) remaineth for ever." But the mercies of a Christian are to extend to all: "Do good to all men, especially to the household of faith."* And this diffusion of a mercy, not only to brethren, but to aliens and enemies, is that which St Paul calls "goodness,"† still retaining the old appellative for Judaical mercy, "righteousness:" "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die." So that the Christian mercy must be a mercy of the whole man, the heart must be merciful, and the hand operating in "the labour of love;" and it must be extended to all persons of all capacities, according as their necessity requires, and our ability permits, and our endearments and other obligations dispose of and determine the order.

The acts of this grace are: 1. To pity the miseries of all persons, and all calamities, spiritual or temporal, having a fellow-feeling in their afflictions. 2. To be afflicted and sad in the public judgments imminent or incumbent upon a church, or state, or family. 3. To pray to God for remedy for all afflicted persons. 4. To do all acts of bodily assistance to all miserable and distressed people, to relieve the poor, to redeem captives, to forgive debts to disabled persons, to pay debts for them, to lend them money, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to rescue persons from dangers, to defend and relieve the oppressed, to comfort widows and fatherless children, to help them to right that suffer wrong; and, in brief, to do any thing of relief, support, succour, and comfort. 5. To do all acts of spiritual mercy, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish the erring, to strengthen the weak, to resolve the scrupulous, to teach the ignorant, and any thing else which may be instrumental to his conversion, perseverance, restitution, and salvation, or may rescue him from spiritual dangers, or supply him in any ghostly necessity. The reward of this virtue is symbolical to the virtue itself, the grace and glory differing in nothing but degrees, and every virtue being a reward to itself. "The merciful shall receive mercy;" mercy "to help them in time of need;" mercy from God, who will not only give them the great mercies of pardon and eternity, but also dispose the hearts of others to pity and supply their needs, as they have done to others. For the present, there is nothing more noble than to be beneficial to others, and to "lift up the poor out of the mire," and rescue them from misery; it is to do the work of God: and for the future, nothing is a greater title to a mercy, at the day of judgment, than to have shown mercy to our necessitous brother; it being expressed to be the only rule and instance in which Christ means to judge the world, in their mercy and charity, or their unmercifulness, respectively: "I was hungry and ye fed me," or ye fed me not: and so we stand or fall in the great and eternal scrutiny. And it was the prayer of St Paul, (Onesiphorus showed kindness to the

* Gal. vi. 10.

† Rom. v. 7.

great apostle,) "The Lord show him a mercy in that day." For a cup of charity, though but full "of cold water, shall not lose its reward."

Sixthly: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." This purity of heart includes purity of hands. "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? even he that is of clean hands and a pure heart;" that is, "he that hath not given his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour."* It signifies justice of action and candour of spirit, innocence of manners and sincerity of purpose; it is one of those great circumstances that consummate charity: "for the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned:"† that is, a heart free from all carnal affections, not only in the matter of natural impurity, but also spiritual and immaterial; such as are heresies, (which are therefore impurities, because they mingle secular interest or prejudice with persuasions in religion,) seditions, hurtful and impious stratagems, and all those which St Paul enumerates to be "works" or "fruits of the flesh." "A good conscience;" that is, a conscience either innocent or penitent, a state of grace, either a not having prevaricated, or a being restored to our baptismal purity. "Faith unfeigned;" that also is the purity of sincerity, and excludes hypocrisy, timorous and half persuasions, neutrality and indifferency in matters of salvation. And all these do integrate the whole duty of charity. But purity, as it is a special grace, signifies only honesty and uprightness of soul, without hypocrisy to God and dissimulation towards men; and then a freedom from all carnal desires, so as not to be governed or led by them. Chastity is the purity of the body, simplicity is the purity of the spirit: both are the sanctification of the whole man, for the entertainment of the spirit of purity and the spirit of truth.

The acts of this virtue are: 1. To quit all lustful thoughts, not to take delight in them, not to retain them or invite them, but, as objects of displeasure, to avert them from us. 2. To resist all lustful desires, and extinguish them by their proper correctories and remedies. 3. To refuse all occasions, opportunities, and temptations to impurity; denying to please a wanton eye, or to use a lascivious gesture, or to go into a danger, or to converse with an improper, unsafe object; "hating the garment spotted with the flesh," so St Jude calls it; and "not to look upon a maid," so Job; "not to sit with a woman that is a singer," so the son of Sirach. 4. To be of a liberal soul, not mingling with affections of money and inclinations of covetousness, not doing any act of violence, rapine, or injustice. 5. To be ingenuous in our thoughts, purposes, and professions, speaking nothing contrary to our intentions, but being really what we seem. 6. To give all our faculties and affections to God, without dividing interests between God and his enemies, without entertaining of any one crime in society with our pretences for God. 7. Not to lie in sin, but instantly to repent of it and return, "purifying our conscience from dead works." 8. Not to dissemble our faith or belief when we are required to its confession, pretending a persuasion complying with those from whom secretly we differ. Lust, covetousness, and hypocrisy, are the three great enemies of this grace; they are the moles of our eyes, and the spots of our souls. The reward of purity is the vision beatifical. If we are "pure as God is pure, we shall" also "see him as he is: when we awake up after his

* Psalm xxiv. 3, 4.

† 1 Tim. i 5.

likeness, we shall behold his presence." To which in this world we are consigned by freedom from the cares of covetousness, the shame of lust, the fear of discovery, and the stings of an evil conscience, which are the portion of the several impurities here forbidden.

Seventhly : "Blessed are the peace-makers ; for they shall be called the children of God. The wisdom of God is first pure, and then peaceable ;"* that is the order of the beatitudes. As soon as Jesus was born, the angels sang a hymn, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men ;" signifying the two great errands upon which Christ was despatched in his legation from heaven to earth. He is "the Prince of Peace." "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man ever shall see God." The acts of this grace are : 1. To mortify our anger, peevishness, and fiery dispositions, apt to enkindle upon every slight accident, inadvertency, or misfortune of a friend or servant. 2. Not to be hasty, rash, provocative, or upbraiding in our language. 3. To live quietly and serenely in our families and neighbourhoods. 4. Not to backbite, slander, misreport, or undervalue any man, carrying tales, or sowing dissension between brethren. 5. Not to interest ourselves in the quarrels of others, by abetting either part, except where charity calls us to rescue the oppressed ; and then also to do a work of charity without mixtures of uncharitableness. 6. To avoid all suits of law, as much as is possible, without intrenching upon any other collateral obligation towards a third interest, or a necessary support for ourselves or great convenience for our families ; or, if we be engaged in law, to pursue our just interests with just means and charitable maintenance. 7. To endeavour by all means to reconcile disagreeing persons. 8. To endeavour, by affability and fair deportment, to win the love of our neighbours. 9. To offer satisfaction to all whom we have wronged or slandered, and to remit the offences of others, and, in trials of right, to find out the most charitable expedient to determine it, as by indifferent arbitration, or something like it. 10. To be open, free, and ingenuous, in reprehensions and fair expostulations with persons whom we conceive to have wronged us, that no seed of malice or rancour may be latent in us, and, upon the breath of a new displeasure, break out into a flame. 11. To be modest in our arguings, disputings, and demands, not laying great interest upon trifles. 12. To moderate balance, and temper our zeal, by the rules of prudence and the allay of charity, that we quarrel not for opinions, nor entitle God in our impotent and mistaken fancies, nor lose charity for a pretence of an article of faith. 13. To pray heartily for our enemies, real or imaginary, always loving and being apt to benefit their persons, and to cure their faults by charitable remedies. 14. To abstain from doing all affronts, disgraces, slights, and uncomely jeerings and mockings of our neighbour, not giving him appellatives of scorn or irrision. 15. To submit to all our superiors in all things, either doing what they command, or suffering what they impose ; at no hand lifting our heel against those upon whom the characters of God, and the marks of Jesus, are imprinted in signal and eminent authority. 16. Not to invade the possessions of our neighbours, or commence war, but when we are bound by justice and legal trust to defend the rights of others, or our own, in order to our duty. 17. Not to "speak evil of

* Jam s iii. 17.

dignities," or undervalue their persons, or publish their faults, or upbraid the levities of our governors ; knowing that they also are designed by God, to be converted to us for castigation and amendment of us. 18. Not to be busy in other men's affairs. And then "the peace of God will rest upon us."* The reward is no less than the adoption and inheritance of sons ; for "he hath given us power to be called the sons of God ;" for he is the Father of peace, and the sons of peace are the sons of God, and therefore have a title to the inheritance of sons, to be heirs with God, and co-heirs with Christ, in the kingdom of peace, and essential and never-failing charity.†

Eightly: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This being the hardest command in the whole discipline of Jesus, is fortified with a double blessedness ; for it follows immediately, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you ;" meaning, that all persecution for a cause of righteousness, though the affliction be instanced only in reproachful language, shall be a title to the blessedness. Any suffering, for any good or harmless action, is a degree of martyrdom. It being the greatest testimony in the world of the greatest love, to quit that for God which hath possessed our most natural, regular, and orderly affections. It is a preferring God's cause before our own interest ; it is a loving of virtue without secular ends ; it is the noblest, the most resigned, ingenuous, valiant act in the world, to die for God, whom we never have seen ; it is the crown of faith, the confidence of hope, and our greatest charity. The primitive churches living under persecution commenced many pretty opinions concerning the state and special dignity of martyrs, apportioning to them one of the three coronets which themselves did knit, and supposed as pendants to the great "crown of righteousness." They made it suppletory of baptism, expiatory of sin, satisfactory of public penances ; they placed them in bliss immediately, declared them to need no after-prayer, such as the devotion of those times used to pour upon the graves of the faithful: with great prudence they did endeavour to alleviate this burden, and sweeten the bitter chalice ; and they did it by such doctrines, which did only demonstrate this great truth, That since "no love was greater than to lay down our lives," nothing could be so great but God would indulge to them. And indeed, whatsoever they said in this had no inconvenience, nor would it now, unless men should think mere suffering to be sufficient to excuse a wicked life, or that they be invited to dishonour an excellent patience with the mixture of an impure action. There are many who would die for Christ if they were put to it, and yet will not quit a lust for him: those are hardly to be esteemed Christ's martyrs: unless they be "dead unto sin," their dying for an article or a good action, will not pass the great scrutiny. And it may be boldness of spirit, or sullenness, or an honourable gallantry of mind, or something that is excellent in civil and political estimate, moves the person, and endears the suffering ; but that love only "which keeps the commandments" will teach us to die for love, and from love to pass to blessedness through the red sea of blood. And, indeed, it is more easy to die for chastity, than to live with it: and many women have been found, who suffered death under the violence of tyrants for a defence of their holy vows

* Phil. iv. 9. 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. 2 Thess. iii. 16. Heb. xiii. 20.

† Rom. viii. 17.

and purity, who, had they long continued amongst pleasures, courtships, curiosities, and importunities of men, might perchance have yielded that to a lover, which they denied to an executioner. St Cyprian observes, that our blessed Lord, in admitting the innocent babes of Bethlehem first to die for him, did, to all generations of Christendom, consign this lesson, That only persons holy and innocent were fit to be Christ's martyrs. And I remember, that the prince of the Latin poets, over against the region and seats of infants, places in the shades below persons that suffered death wrongfully; but adds, that this their death was not enough to place them in such blessed mansions, but the Judge first made inquiry into their lives, and accordingly designed their station. It is certain, that such dyings, or great sufferings, are heroical actions, and of power to make great compensations, and redemptions of time, and of omissions and imperfections; but if the man be unholy, so also are his sufferings: for heretics have died, and vicious persons have suffered in a good cause, and a dog's neck may be cut off in sacrifice, and swine's blood may fill the trench about the altar: but God only accepts the sacrifice which is pure and spotless, first seasoned with salt, then seasoned with fire. The true martyr must have all the preceding graces, and then he shall receive all the beatitudes.

The acts of this duty are: 1. Boldly to confess the faith, nobly to exercise public virtues, not to be ashamed of any thing that is honest, and rather to quit our goods, our liberty, our health, and life itself, than to deny what we are bound to affirm, or to omit what we are bound to do, or to pretend contrary to our present persuasion. 2. To rejoice in afflictions; counting it honourable to be conformable to Christ, and to wear the cognizance of Christianity, whose certain lot it is to suffer the hostility and violence of enemies, visible and invisible. 3. Not to revile our persecutors, but to bear the cross with evenness, tranquillity, patience, and charity. 4. To offer our sufferings to the glory of God, and to join them with the passions of Christ, by doing it in love to God, and obedience to his sanctions, and testimony of some part of his religion, and designing it as a part of duty. The reward is "the kingdom of heaven;" which can be no other but eternal salvation, in case the martyrdom be consummate: and "they also shall be made perfect;" so the words of the reward were read in Clement's time. If it be less, it keeps its proportion: all suffering persons are the combination of saints; they make the church, they are the people of the kingdom, and heirs of the covenant. For if they be but confessors, and confess Christ in prison, though they never preach upon the rack or under the axe, yet "Christ will confess them before his heavenly Father;" and "they shall have a portion where they shall never be persecuted any more."

ON DUELLING.

THE vain pretences of vainer persons have often made a question where there is no scruple; and if I may defend my life with the sword, or with any thing which nature and the laws forbid not, why not also mine honour, which is as dear as life, which makes my life without contempt,

useful to my friend, and comfortable to myself? For to be reputed a coward, a baffled person, and one that will take affronts, is to be miserable and scorned, and to invite all insolent persons to do me injuries. May I not be permitted to fight for mine honour, and to wipe off the stains of my reputation? Honour is as dear as life, and sometimes dearer. To this I have many things to say. For that which men in this question call honour, is nothing but a reputation amongst persons vain, unchristian in their deportment, empty and ignorant souls, who count that the standard of honour which is the instrument of reprobation; as if to be a gentleman were to be no Christian. They that have built their reputation upon such societies, must take new estimates of it, according as the wine, or fancy, or custom, or some great fighting person shall determine it; and whatsoever invites a quarrel is a rule of honour. But then it is a sad consideration to remember, that it is accounted honour not to recede from any thing we have said or done: it is honour not to take the lie, in the meantime it is not dishonourable to lie indeed, but to be told so; and not to kill him that says it, and venture my life and his too, that is a forfeiture of reputation. A mistress's favour, an idle discourse, a jest, a jealousy, a health, a gaiety, any thing must engage two lives in hazard, and two souls in ruin; or else they are dishonoured. As if a life, which is so dear to a man's self, which ought to be dear to others, which all laws, and wise princes, and states, have secured by the circumvallation of laws and penalties, which nothing but heaven can recompense for the loss of, which is the breath of God, which to preserve Christ died, the Son of God died; as if this were so contemptible a thing, that it must be ventured for satisfaction of a vicious person, or a vain custom, or such a folly which a wise and a severe person had rather die than be guilty of. Honour is from him that honours; now certainly God and the king are the fountains of honour; right reason and religion, the Scripture and the laws, are the best rules of estimating honour: and if we offer to account our honours by the senseless and illiterate discourses of vain and vicious persons, our honour can be no greater than the fountain from whence it is derivative. Certainly there is no greater honour than to be like the holy Jesus; and he is delectable in the eyes of God, and so are all his relatives and followers, by participation of his honour; and nothing can be more honourable than to do wise and excellent actions, according to the account of Divine and human laws: and if either God or the king can derive honour upon their subjects, then whatsoever is contrary to that which they honour must needs be base, dishonourable and inglorious.

But if we be troubled for fear of new and succeeding injuries, and will needs fight, and, as much as lies in us, kill our brother to prevent an injury, nothing can be more unworthy of a Christian, nothing can be more inhuman. Cato, pleading in the Roman senate in the behalf of the Rhodian ambassadors who came to beg peace of the commonwealth, which had entertained an anger and some thoughts of war against them, upon pretence that the Rhodians would war with them when they durst, discoursed severely and prudently against such unreasonable purposes. And the life of men, and the interest of states, is not like the trade of fencers, whose lot is to conquer if they strike first, to die if they be prevented: man's life is not established upon so unequal and unreasonable necessities, that either we must first do an injury, or else it is certain we must receive

a mischief. God's providence and care, in his government of the world, is more vigilant and merciful; and he protects persons innocent and just in all cases, except when he means to make an injury the instrument of a grace, or a violent death to be the gate of glory. It was not ill answered of Merope to king Polyphontes, who therefore killed his brother, because he had entertained a purpose to have killed him: "You should only have done the same injury to him which he did to you; you should still have had a purpose to kill him:" for his injustice went no farther; and it is hard to requite ill and uncertain purposes with actual murder, especially when we are as much secured by the power of laws, as the whole commonwealth is, in all its greatest interests. And, therefore, for Christians to kill a man to prevent being baffled or despised, is to use an extreme desperate remedy, infinitely painful and deadly, to prevent a little griping in the belly, foreseen as possible to happen, it may be, three years after. But besides, this objection supposes a disease almost as earnestly to be cured as this of the main question; for it represents a man keeping company with lewd, debauched persons, spending his time in vanity, drunken societies, or engaged in lust, or placing his scene amongst persons apt to do affronts and unworthy misdemeanours; and indeed an affront, an injury, a blow, or a loud disgrace, is not the consequent of not fighting, but a punishment for engaging in loose, base, and vicious company. If the gallants of the age would find an honest and a noble employment, or would be delicate in the choice of their friends and company, or would be severe in taking accounts of themselves and of their time, would live as becomes persons wise and innocent, that is, like Christians, they would soon perceive themselves removed far from injuries, and yet farther from trouble, when such levities of mischance or folly should intervene. But suppose a man affronted or disgraced, it is considerable whether the man deserved it or not. If he did, let him entertain it for his punishment, and use it for an instrument of correction and humility: if he did not, as an instance of fortitude and despite of lower things. But to venture lives to abolish a past act, is madness, unless in both those lives there was not good enough to be esteemed greater, and of better value, than the light affront had in it of misery and trouble. Certainly those persons are very unfortunate, in whose lives much more pleasure is not than there is mischief in a light blow, or a lighter affront, from a vain or an angry person. But suppose there were not, yet how can fighting or killing my adversary wipe off my aspersion, or take off my blow, or prove that I did not lie? For it is but an ill argument to say, If I dare kill him, then I did not lie; or if I dare fight then he struck me not; or if I dare venture damnation, then I am an honourable person. And yet farther, who gave me power over my own life, or over the life of another, that I shall venture my own, and offer to take his? God and God's vicegerent only are the lords of lives; who made us judges, and princes, or gods? and if we be not such, we are murderers and villains. When Moses would have parted the duellists that fought in Egypt, the injurious person asked him, "Who made thee a judge or ruler over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" meaning, he had no power to kill, none to judge of life and death, unless he had been made a ruler. Yea, but flesh and blood cannot endure a blow or a disgrace. Grant that too; but take this into the account, "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And

yet, besides this, those persons have but a tender stock of reason, and wisdom, and patience, who have not discourse enough to make them bear an injury, which the philosophy of the Gentiles, without the light of Christianity, taught them to tolerate with so much equanimity and dispassionate entertainment. That person is not a man, who knows not how to suffer the inconvenience of an accident and indiscretion of light persons; or if he could not, yet certainly that is a mad impatience, when a man, to remedy the pain of a drop of scalding water, shall drench himself in the liquid flames of pitch and a bituminous bath.

Truth is, to fight a duel is a thing that all kingdoms are bound to restrain with the highest severity; it is a consociation of many of the worst acts that a person ordinarily can be guilty of; it is want of charity, of justice, of humility, of trust in God's providence; it is therefore pride, and murder, and injustice, and infinite unreasonableness, and nothing of a Christian, nothing of excuse, nothing of honour in it, if God and wise men be admitted judges of the lists. And it would be considered, that every one that fights a duel must reckon himself as dead or dying (for however any man flatters himself by saying he will not kill, if he could avoid it; yet rather than be killed he will, and to the danger of being killed his own act exposes him): now, is it a good posture for a man to die with a sword in his hand, thrust at his brother's breast, with a purpose, either explicit or implicit, to have killed him? Can a man die twice, that, in case he miscarries and is damned for the first ill dying, he may mend his fault, and die better the next time? Can his vain, imaginary, and fantastic shadow of reputation, make him recompense for the disgrace and confusion of face, and pains and horrors of eternity? Is there no such thing as forgiving injuries, nothing of the discipline of Jesus in our spirits? are we called by the name of Christ, and have nothing in us but the spirit of Cain, and Nimrod, and Joab? If neither reason nor religion can rule us, neither interest nor safety can determine us, neither life nor eternity can move us, neither God nor wise men be sufficient judges of honour to us; then our damnation is just, but it is heavy; our fall is certain, but it is cheap, base, and inglorious. And let not the vanities, or the gallants of the world, slight this friendly monition, rejecting it with scorn, because it is talking like a divine: it were no disparagement if they would do so too, and believe accordingly; and they would find a better return of honour in the crowns of eternity by talking like a divine, than by dying like a fool; by living in imitation and obedience to the laws of the holy Jesus, than by perishing, or committing murder, or by attempting it, or by venturing it, like a weak, impotent, passionate, and brutish person.

OF PRAYER.

THE soul of a Christian is the house of God: "Ye are God's building,"* saith St Paul; but the house of God is the house of prayer: and

* 1 Cor. iii. 9.

therefore, prayer is the work of the soul, whose organs are intended for instruments of the Divine praises; and when every stop and pause of those instruments is but the conclusion of a collect, and every breathing is a prayer, then the body becomes a temple, and the soul is the sanctuary, and more private recess, and place of intercourse. Prayer is the great duty, and the greatest privilege of a Christian; it is his intercourse with God, his sanctuary in troubles, his remedy for sins, his cure of griefs, and, as St Gregory calls it, "it is the principal instrument whereby we minister to God, in execution of the decrees of eternal predestination;" and those things which God intends for us, we bring to ourselves by the mediation of holy prayers. Prayer is the "ascent of the mind to God, and a petitioning for such things as we need for our support and duty." It is an abstract and summary of Christian religion. Prayer is an act of religion and Divine worship, confessing his power and his mercy; it celebrates his attributes, and confesses his glories, and reveres his person, and implores his aid, and gives thanks for his blessings: it is an act of humility, condescension, and dependence, expressed in the prostration of our bodies, and humiliation of our spirits: it is an act of charity, when we pray for others; it is an act of repentance, when it confesses and begs pardon for our sins, and exercises every grace according to the design of the man, and the matter of the prayer. So that there will be less need to amass arguments to invite us to this duty; every part is an excellence, and every end of it is a blessing, and every design is a motive, and every need is an impulsive to this holy office. Let us but remember how many needs we have, at how cheap a rate we may obtain their remedies, and yet how honourable the employment is, to go to God with confidence, and to fetch our supplies with easiness and joy; and then without farther preface, we may address ourselves to the understanding of that duty by which we imitate the employment of angels and beatified spirits, by which we ascend to God in spirit while we remain on earth, and God descends on earth while he yet resides in heaven, sitting there on the throne of his kingdom.

Our first inquiry must be concerning the matter of our prayers; for our desires are not to be the rule of our prayers, unless reason and religion be the rule of our desires. The old heathens prayed to their gods for such things which they were ashamed to name publicly before men; and these were their private prayers, which they durst not, for their indecency or iniquity, make public. And, indeed, sometimes the best men ask of God things not unlawful in themselves, yet very hurtful to them: and, therefore, as by the Spirit of God and right reason we are taught, in general, what is lawful to be asked; so it is still to be submitted to God, when we have asked lawful things, to grant to us in kindness, or to deny us in mercy: after all the rules that can be given us, we not being able, in many instances, to judge for ourselves, unless also we could certainly pronounce concerning future contingencies. But the Holy Ghost being now sent upon the church, and the rule of Christ being left to his church, together with his form of prayer, taught and prescribed to his disciples, we have sufficient instruction for the matter of our prayers, so far as concerns the lawfulness or unlawfulness. And the rule is easy and of no variety. 1. For we are bound to pray for all things that concern our duty, all that we are bound to labour for; such as are glory and grace, necessary assistances of the Spirit, and rewards spiritual, heaven, and heavenly things. 2. Con-

erning those things which we may, with safety, hope for, but are not matter of duty to us, we may lawfully testify our hope and express our desires by petition : but if, in their particulars, they are under no express promise, but only conveniences of our life and person, it is only lawful to pray for them under condition, that they may conform to God's will and our duty, as they are good, and placed in the best order of eternity. Therefore, 1. For spiritual blessings let our prayers be particularly importunate, perpetual, and persevering : 2. For temporal blessings let them be generally short, conditional, and modest : 3. And whatsoever things are of mixed nature, more spiritual than riches, and less necessary than graces, such as are gifts and exterior aids, we may pray for them as we may desire them, and as we may expect them ; that is, with more confidence and less restraint than in the matter of temporal requests, but with more reservedness, and less boldness of petition, than when we pray for the graces of sanctification. In the first case we are bound to pray ; in the second, it is only lawful under certain conditions ; in the third, it becomes to us an act of zeal, nobleness, and Christian prudence. But the matter of our prayers is best taught us, in the form our Lord taught his disciples ; which, because it is short, mysterious, and, like the treasures of the Spirit, full of wisdom and latent senses, it is not improper to draw forth those excellencies, which are intended and signified by every petition ; that, by so excellent an authority, we may know what it is lawful to beg of God.

“ Our Father, which art in heaven.” The address reminds us of many parts of our duty. “ If God be our Father, where is his fear,” and reverence, and obedience ? “ If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham ;” and, “ Ye are of your father, the devil, for his works ye do.” Let us not dare to call him Father, if we be rebels and enemies ; but if we be obedient, then we know he is our Father, and will give us a child's portion, and the inheritance of sons. But it is observable, that Christ, here speaking concerning private prayer, does describe it in a form of plural signification ; to tell us, that we are to draw into the communication of our prayers all those who are confederated in the common relation of sons to the same Father. “ Which art in heaven,” tells us, where our hopes and our hearts must be fixed, whither our desires and our prayers must tend. “ Where our treasure is, there must our hearts be also.”

“ Hallowed be thy name.” That is ; Let thy name, thy essence, and glorious attributes, be honoured and adored in all the world, believed by faith, loved by charity, celebrated with praises, thanked with eucharist ; and let thy name be hallowed in us, as it is in itself. Thy name being called upon us, let us walk worthy of that calling ; that “ our light may shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify thee, our Father, which art in heaven.” In order, also, to the sanctification of thy name, grant that all our praises, hymns, eucharistical remembrances, and representments of thy glories, may be useful, blessed, and effectual, for the dispersing thy fame, and advancing thy honour over all the world. This is a direct and formal act of worshipping and adoration. The name of God is representative of God himself, and it signifies : Be thou worshipped and adored, be thou thanked and celebrated, with honour and eucharist.

“ Thy kingdom come.” That is : As thou hast caused to be preached

and published the coming of thy kingdom, the peace and truth, the revelation and glories, of the Gospel : so let it come verily and effectually to us, and all the world ; that thou mayest truly reign in our spirits, exercising absolute dominion, subduing all thine enemies, ruling in our faculties, in the understanding by faith, in the will by charity, in the passions by mortification, in the members by a chaste and right use of the parts. And as it was more particularly, and in the letter, proper at the beginning of Christ's preaching, when he also taught the prayer, that God would hasten the coming of the Gospel to all the world ; so now also, and ever it will be, in its proportion necessary and pious, to pray that it may come still ; making greater progress in the world, extending itself where yet it is not, and intending itself where it is already ; that the kingdom of Christ may not only be in us, in name and form, and honourable appellatives, but in effect and power. This petition, in the first ages of Christianity, was not expounded to signify a prayer for Christ's second coming ; because, the Gospel not being preached to all the world, they prayed for the delay of the day of judgment, that Christ's kingdom upon earth might have its proper increment : but since then, every age, as it is more forward in time, so it is more earnest in desire, to accomplish the intermedial prophecies, that the kingdom of God the Father might come in glories infinite. And, indeed, the kingdom of grace being in order to the kingdom of glory, this, as it is principally to be desired, so may possibly be intended chiefly : which, also, is the more probable, because the address of this prayer being to God the Father, it is proper to observe, that the kingdom of grace, or of the Gospel, is called the kingdom of the Son ;* and that of glory, in the style of the Scripture, is the kingdom of the Father. St German, patriarch of Constantinople, expounds it with some little difference, but not ill : "Thy kingdom come," that is, let thy Holy Spirit come into us ; for "the kingdom of heaven is within us," saith the holy Scripture : and so it intimates our desires, that the promise of the Father, and the prophecies of old, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, may come upon us. Let that "anointing from above" descend upon us, whereby we may be anointed kings and priests, in a spiritual kingdom and priesthood, by a holy chrism.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." That is, the whole economy and dispensation of thy providence, be the guide of the world, and the measure of our desire ; that we be patient in all accidents, conformable to God's will, both in doing and in suffering ; submitting to changes, and even to persecutions, and doing all God's will : which because without God's aid we cannot do, therefore we beg it of him by prayer ; but by his aid we are confident we may do it, in the manner of angelical obedience ; that is, promptly, readily, cheerfully, and with all our faculties. Or thus : As the angels in heaven serve thee with harmony, concord, and peace ; so let us all join in the service of thy majesty, with peace and purity, and love unfeigned ; that as all the angels are in peace, and amongst them there is no persecutor, and none persecuted, there is none afflicting or afflicted, none assaulting or assaulted, but all, in sweetness and peaceable serenity, glorifying thee ; so let thy will be done on earth, by all the world, in peace and unity, in charity and tranquillity ; that with one heart, and one voice, we may glorify thee, our universal Father ; having in us

* Colos. i. 13. Rev. i. 9. Matt. xiii. 41. Luke vi. 20. Matt. xvi. 28.

nothing that may displease thee, having quitted all our own desires and pretensions, living in angelic conformity, our souls subject to thee, and our passions to our souls ; that “in earth,” also, “thy will” may “be done,” as in the spirit and soul, which is a portion of the heavenly substance. These three petitions are addressed to God, by way of adoration. In the first, the soul puts on the affections of a child, and divests itself of its own interest, offering itself up wholly to the designs and glorifications of God. In the second, it puts on the relation and duty of a subject to her legitimate prince, seeking the promotion of his regal interest. In the third, she puts on the affection of a spouse loving the same love, and choosing the same objects, and delighting in unions and conformities. The next part descends lower, and makes addresses to God, in relation to our own necessities.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” That is, give unto us all that is necessary for the support of our lives, the bread of our necessity : so the Syriac interpreter reads it : “This day give us the portion of bread, which is day by day necessary.” Give us the bread or support which we shall need all our lives ; only this day minister our present part. For we pray for the necessary bread or maintenance, which God knows we shall need all our days ; but, that we “be not careful for to-morrow,” we are taught to pray, not that it be all at once presented or deposited, but that God would minister it as we need it, how he pleases : but our needs are to be the measure of our desires, our desires must not make our needs ; that we may be confident of the Divine providence, and not at all covetous : for therefore God feeds his people with extemporary provisions, that by needing always, they may learn to pray to him ; and, by being still supplied, may learn to trust him for the future, and thank him for what is past, and rejoice in the present. So God rained down manna, giving them their daily portion ; and so all fathers and masters minister to their children and servants, giving them their proportion as they eat it, not the meat of a year at once ; and yet no child or servant fears want, if his parent or lord were good, and wise, and rich. And it is necessary for all to pray this prayer : the poor, because they want the bread, and have it not deposited but in the hands of God : “mercy ploughing the fields of heaven,” (as Job’s expression is,) brings them corn ; and “the cattle upon a thousand hills are God’s,” and they find the poor man meat. The rich also need this prayer ; because, although they have the bread, yet they need the blessing ; and what they have now may perish, or be taken from them ; and as preservation is a perpetual creation, so the continuing to rich men what God hath already bestowed is a continual giving it. Young men must pray, because their needs are like to be the longer ; and old men, because they are present. But all these are to pray but for the present ; that which, in estimation of law, is to be reckoned as imminent upon the present, and part of this state and condition. But it is great improvidence, and an unchristian spirit, for old men to heap up provisions, and load their sumpters still the more, by how much their way is shorter. But there is also a bread which came down from heaven, a diviner nutriment of our souls, the food and wine of angels, Christ himself, as he communicates himself in the expresses of his word and sacraments ; and if we be destitute of this bread, we are miserable and perishing people. We must pray, that our souls also may feed upon those celestial viands, prepared for us in the antepasts of the

Gospel, till the great and fuller meal of the supper of the Lamb shall answer all our prayers, and satisfy every desire.

“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” Not only those sins of infirmity, invasion, and sudden surprise, which, like excrescencies of luxuriant trees, adhere to many actions by inadvertency, and either natural weakness or accidental prejudice ; but also all those great sins, which were washed off from our souls, and the stain taken away when we first received the adoption of sons. For although Christ hath taken off the guilt, yet still there remains the disreputation ; and St Paul calls himself “the chiefest of sinners,” not referring to his present condition, but to his former persecuting the church of God, which is one of the greatest crimes in the world ; and for ever he asked pardon for it : and so must we, knowing that they may return ; if we shake off the yoke of Christ, and break his cords from us, the bands of the covenant evangelical, the sins will return so as to undo us. And this we pray, with a tacit obligation to forgive : for so only, and upon that condition, we beg pardon to be given or continued respectively ; that is, as we from our hearts forgive them that did us injury in any kind, never entertaining so much as a thought of revenge, but, contrariwise, loving them that did us wrong ; for so we beg that God should do to us : and, therefore, it is but a lesser revenge to say, I will forgive, but I will never have to do with him. For if he become an object of charity, we must have to do with him ; to relieve him ; because he needs prayers, we must have to do with him, and pray for him : and to refuse his society, when it is reasonably and innocently offered, is to deny that to him, which Christians have only been taught to deny to persons excommunicate, to persons under punishment, that is, to persons not yet forgiven : and we shall have but an evil portion, if God should forgive our sins, and should not also love us, and do us grace, and bestow benefits upon us. So we must forgive others ; so God forgives us.

“And lead us not into temptation.” St Cyprian, out of an old Latin copy, reads it, “Suffer us not to be led into temptation ;” that is, suffer us not to be overcome by temptation. And, therefore, we are bound to prevent our access to such temptation, whose very approximation is dangerous, and the contact is irregular and evil ; such as are temptations of the flesh : yet, in other temptations, the assault sometimes makes confident, and hardens a resolution. For some spirits, who are softened by fair usages, are steeled and emboldened by a persecution. But of what nature soever the temptations be, whether they be such whose approach a Christian is bound to fear, or such which are the certain lot of Christians, (such are troubles and persecutions, into which, “when we enter,” we must “count it joy,”) yet we are to pray, that we enter not into the possession of the temptation, that we be not overcome by it.

“But deliver us from evil.” From the assaults or violence of evil, from “the wicked one,” who not only presents us with objects, but heightens our concupiscence, and makes us imaginative, fantastical, and passionate ; setting on the temptation, making the lust active, and the man full of appetite, and the appetite full of energy and power : therefore deliver us from the evil one, who is interested, as an enemy, in every hostility, and in every danger. Let not Satan have any power or advantage over us ; and let not evil men prevail upon us in our danger, much less to our ruin.

Make us "safe under the covering of thy wings," against all fraud and every violence; that no temptation destroy our hopes, or break our strength, or alter our state, or overthrow our glories. In these last petitions, which concern ourselves, the soul hath affections proper to her own needs; as in the former proportion, to God's glory. In the first of these, the affection of a poor, indigent, and necessitous beggar; in the second, of a delinquent and penitent servant; in the last, of a person in affliction or danger. And, after all this, the reason of our confidence is derived from God.

"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever." That is, these which we beg, are for the honour of thy kingdom, for the manifestation of thy power, and the glory of thy name and mercies: and it is an express doxology or adoration, which is apt and fit to conclude all our prayers and addresses to God.

These are the generals and great treasures of matter, to which all our present or sudden needs are reducible; and when we make our prayers more minute and particular, if the instance be in matter of duty, and merely spiritual, there is no danger: but when our needs are temporal, or we are transported with secular desires, all descending to particulars is a confining the Divine Providence, a judging for ourselves, a begging a temptation oftentimes, sometimes a mischief: and to beg beyond the necessities of our life, is a mutiny against that Providence, which assigns to Christians no more but "food and raiment" for their own use: all other excrescencies of possessions being intrusted to the rich man's dispensation, only as to a steward; and he shall be accountable for the coat that lies by him, as the portion of moths, and for the shoes which are the spoils of mouldiness, and the contumely of plenty. "Grant me, O Lord, not what I desire, but what is profitable for me." For sometimes we desire that, which, in the succeeding event of things, will undo us. This rule is in all things that concern ourselves. There is some little difference in the affairs and necessities of other men: for, provided we submit to the Divine Providence, and pray for good things for others, only with a tacit condition, so far as they are good and profitable, in order to the best ends; yet, if we be particular, there is no covetousness in it; there may be indiscretion in the particular; but in the general no fault, because it is a prayer, and a design of charity.

The next consideration will be concerning the manner; I mean both the manner of our persons, and the manner of our prayers; that is, with what conditions we ought to approach to God, and with what circumstances the prayers may, or ought to be performed. The conditions to make our prayers holy and certain to prevail, are: 1. That we live good lives, endeavouring to conform, by holy obedience, to all the Divine commandments. This condition is expressly recorded by St John: "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, and whatsoever we ask of him we shall obtain:"* and St James affirms, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much:"† and our blessed Saviour, limiting the confidence of our prayers for forgiveness to our charity and forgiving others, plainly tells us, that the uncharitable and unrighteous person shall not be heard. And the blind man in the

* 1 John iii. 21.

† James v. 16

Gospel understood well what he said: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper, and doeth his will, him he heareth."* And it was so decreed and resolved a point in the doctrine of their religion, that it was a proverbial saying. And although this discourse of the blind man was of a restrained occasion, and signified, if Christ had been a false prophet, God would not have attested his sermons with the power of miracles; yet in general also he had been taught by David, "If I regard iniquity in my heart † the Lord will not hear my prayer," and, therefore, when men "pray in every place," (for so they are commanded,) "let them lift up pure hands, without anger and contention."‡ And indeed, although every sin entertained with a free choice and a full understanding, is an obstruction to our prayers; yet the special sin of uncharitableness makes the biggest cloud, and is, in the proper matter of it, an indisposition for us to receive mercy: for he who is softened with apprehension of his own needs of mercy, will be tender-hearted towards his brother; and, therefore, he that hath no bowels here, can have no aptness there to receive, or heartily to hope for mercy. But this rule is to be understood of persons who persevere in the habit and remanent affections of sin; so long as they entertain sin with love, complacency, and joy, they are in a state of enmity with God, and therefore in no fit disposition to receive pardon and the entertainment of friends: but penitent sinners and returning souls, laden and grieved with their heavy pressures, are, next to holy innocents, the aptest persons in the world to be heard in their prayers for pardon; but they are in no farther disposition to large favours, and more eminent charities. A sinner, in the beginning of his penance, will be heard for himself, and yet also he needs the prayers of holy persons more signally than others; for he hath but some very few degrees of dispositions to reconciliation: but in prayers of intercession or mediation for others, only holy and very pious persons are fit to be interested. All men, as matter of duty, must pray for all men: but in the great necessities of a prince, of a church, of a kingdom, or of a family, or of a great danger and calamity to a single person, only a Noah, a David, a Daniel, a Jeremiah, an Enoch, or Job, are fit and proportioned advocates. God so requires holiness in us, that our prayers may be accepted, that he entertains them in several degrees, according to the degrees of our sanctity; to fewer or more purposes, according as we are little or great in the kingdom of heaven. As for those irregular donations of good things which wicked persons ask for and have, they are either no mercies, but instruments of cursing and crime, or else they are designs of grace intended to convince them of their unworthiness; and so, if they become not instruments of their conversion, they are aggravations of their ruin.

Secondly: The second condition I have already explained in the description of the matter of our prayers. For although we may lawfully ask for whatsoever we need, and this leave is consigned to us in those words of our blessed Saviour, "Your heavenly Father knoweth what you have need of:" yet, because God's providence walks in the great deep, that is, his footsteps are in the water, and leave no impression; no former act of grace becomes a precedent that he will give us that in kind which then he saw convenient, and therefore gave us, and now he sees to be inconvenient, and

* John ix. 31.

† Psalm lxxvi. 18.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 8.

therefore does deny. Therefore, in all things, but what are matter of necessary and unmingled duty, we must send up our prayers; but humility, mortification, and conformity to the Divine will, must attend for an answer, and bring back, not what the public embassy pretends, but what they have in private instructions to desire; accounting that for the best satisfaction which God pleases, not what I have either unnecessarily, or vainly, or sinfully desired.

Thirdly: When our persons are disposed by sanctity, and the matter of our prayers is hallowed by prudence and religious intendments, then we are bound to entertain a full persuasion and confident hope that God will hear us. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall obtain them,"* said our blessed Saviour: and St James, taught from that oracle, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind, and tossed to and fro:†" meaning, that when there is no fault in the matter of our prayers, but that we ask things pleasing to God, and there is no indisposition and hostility in our persons and manners between God and us, then to doubt were to distrust God; for all being right on our parts, if we doubt the issue, the default must be on that part, which to suspect were infinite impiety. But after we have done all we can, if, out of humility, and fear that we are not truly disposed, we doubt of the issue, it is a modesty which will not at all discommend our persons, nor impede the event; provided we at no hand suspect either God's power or veracity. Putting trust in God is an excellent advantage to our prayers; "I will deliver him," saith God, "because he hath put his trust in me." And yet distrusting ourselves, and suspecting our own dispositions, as it pulls us back in our actual confidence of the event, so, because it abates nothing of our confidence in God, it prepares us to receive the reward of humility, and not to lose the praise of a holy trusting in the Almighty.

These conditions are essential: some other there are which are incidents and accessories, but at no hand to be neglected. And the first is, actual or habitual attention to our prayers, which we are to procure with moral and severe endeavours, that we desire not God to hear us when we do not hear ourselves. To which purpose we must avoid, as much as our duty will permit us, multiplicity of cares and exterior employments; for a river cut into many rivulets divides also its strength, and grows contemptible, and apt to be forded by a lamb, and drunk up by a summer sun: so is the spirit of man busied in variety, and divided in itself; it abates its fervour, cools into indifferency, and becomes trifling by its dispersion and inadvertency. Aquinas was once asked, with what compendium a man might best become learned? he answered, By reading of one book: meaning, that an understanding entertained with several objects is intent upon neither, and profits not. And so it is when we pray to God: if the cares of the world intervene, they choke our desire into an indifferency, and suppress the flame into a smoke, and strangle the spirit. But this, being an habitual carelessness and intemperance of spirit, is an enemy to an habitual attention, and therefore is highly criminal, and makes our prayers to be but the labour of the lips, because our desires are lessened by the remanent

* Mark xi. 24

† James i. 5, 6.

affections of the world. But besides an habitual attention in our prayers, that is, a desire in general of all that our prayers pretend to in particular, there is also for the accommodation, and to facilitate the access of our prayers, required, that we attend actually to the words or sense of every collect or petition. To this we must contend with prayer, with actual dereliction and seposition of all our other affairs, though innocent and good in other kinds, by a present spirit. And the use of it is, that such attention is an actual conversing with God ; it occasions the exercise of many acts of virtue, it increases zeal and fervency, and, by reflection, enkindles love and holy desires. And although there is no rule to determine the degree of our actual attention, and it is ordinarily impossible never to wander with a thought, or to be interrupted with a sudden immission into our spirit in the midst of prayers ; yet our duty is, by mortification of our secular desires, by suppression of all our irregular passions, by reducing them to indifference, by severity of spirit, by enkindling our holy appetites and desires of holy things, by silence, and meditation, and repose, to get as forward in this excellency as we can : to which also we may be very much helped by ejaculatory prayers and short breathings ; in which, as, by reason of their short abode upon the spirit, there is less fear of diversion, so also they may so often be renewed, that nothing of the devotion may be unspent, or expire for want of oil to feed and entertain the flame. But the determination of the case of conscience is this : Habitual attention is absolutely necessary in our prayers ; that is, it is altogether our duty to desire of God all that we pray for, though our mind be not actually attending to the form of words ; and, therefore, all worldly desires that are inordinate, must be rescinded, that we more earnestly attend on God than on the world. He that prays to God to give him the gift of chastity, and yet secretly wishes rather for an opportunity of lust, and desires God would not hear him, (as St Austin confesses of himself in his youth,) that man sins for want of holy and habitual desires ; he prays only with his lips, what he in no sense attests in his heart. 2. Actual attention to our prayers is also necessary, not ever to avoid a sin, but that the present prayer become effectual. He that means to feast, and to get thanks of God, must invite the poor ; and yet he that invites the rich, in that he sins not, though he hath no reward of God for that. So that prayer perishes to which the man gives no degree of actual attention, for the prayer is as if it were not ; it is no more than a dream, or an act of custom and order, nothing of devotion ; and so accidentally becomes a sin, (I mean there where, and in what degrees it is avoidable,) by taking God's name in vain. 3. It is not necessary to the prevalency of the prayer, that the spirit actually accompany every clause or word ; if it says a hearty Amen, or in any part of it attests the whole, it is such an attention which the present condition of most men will sometimes permit. 4. A wandering of the spirit, through carelessness, or any vice, or inordinate passion, is in that degree criminal as is the cause, and it is heightened by the greatness of the interruption. 5. It is only excused by our endeavours to cure it, and by our after-acts, either of sorrow, or repetition of the prayer, and reinforcing the intention. And certainly, if we repeat our prayer, in which we have observed our spirits too much to wander, and resolve still to repeat it, (as our opportunities permit,) it may in a good degree defeat the purpose of the enemy, when his own arts shall return upon his head, and the wandering of our

spirits be made the occasion of a prayer, and the parent of a new devotion. 6. Lastly, according to the degrees of our actual attention, so our prayers are more or less perfect : a present spirit being a great instrument and testimony of wisdom, and apt to many great purposes ; and our continual abode with God being a great endearment of our persons, by increasing the affections.

Secondly : The second accessory is "intention of spirit," or fervency ; such as was that of our blessed Saviour, who prayed to his Father with strong cries and loud petitions, not clamorous in language, but strong in spirit. St Paul also, when he was pressed with a strong temptation, prayed thrice, that is, earnestly ; and St James affirms this to be of great value and efficacy to the obtaining blessings, "The effectual fervent prayer of a just person avails much ;" and Elias, though "a man of like passions," yet by earnest prayer he obtained rain, or drought, according as he desired. Now this is properly produced by the greatness of our desire of heavenly things, our true value and estimate of religion, our sense of present pressures, our fears ; and it hath some accidental increases by the disposition of our body, the strength of fancy, and the tenderness of spirit, and assiduity of the dropping of religious discourses ; and in all men is necessary to be so great, as that we prefer heaven and religion before the world, and desire them rather, with the choice of our wills and understanding : though there cannot always be that degree of sensual, pungent, or delectable affections towards religion, as towards the desires of nature and sense ; yet ever we must prefer celestial objects, restraining the appetites of the world, lest they be immoderate, and heightening the desires of grace and glory, lest they become indifferent, and the fire upon the altar of incense be extinct. But the greater zeal and fervour of desire we have in our prayers, the sooner and the greater will the return of the prayer be, if the prayer be for spiritual objects. For other things our desires must be according to our needs, not by a value derived from the nature of the thing, but the usefulness it is of to us, in order to our greater and better purposes.

Thirdly : Of the same consideration it is, that we "persevere and be importunate" in our prayers, by repetition of our desires, and not remitting either our affections or our offices, till God, overcome by our importunity, give a gracious answer. Jacob wrestled with the angel all night, and would not dismiss him till he had given him a blessing ; "Let me alone," saith God, as if he felt a pressure and burden lying upon him by our prayers, or could not quit himself, nor depart, unless we give him leave. And since God is detained by our prayers, and we may keep him as long as we please, and that he will not go away till we leave speaking to him ; he that will dismiss him till he hath his blessing, knows not the value of his benediction, or understands not the energy and power of a persevering prayer. And to this purpose Christ "spake a parable, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* "Praying without ceasing," St Paul calls it ; that is, with continual addresses, frequent interpellations, never ceasing renewing the request till I obtain my desire. For it is not enough to recommend our desires to God with one hearty prayer, and then forget to ask him any more ; but so long as our needs continue.

* Luke xviii. 1.

so long, in all times, and upon all occasions, to renew and repeat our desires : and this is “praying continually.” Just as the widow did to the unjust judge ; she never left going to him, she troubled him every day with her clamorous suit ; so must we “pray always,” that is, every day, and many times every day, according to our occasions and necessities, or our devotion and zeal, or as we are determined by the customs and laws of a church ; never giving over through weariness or distrust, often renewing our desires by a continual succession of devotions, returning at certain and determinate periods. For God’s blessings, though they come infallibly, yet not always speedily ; saving only that it is a blessing to be delayed, that we may increase our desire, and renew our prayers, and do acts of confidence and patience, and ascertain and increase the blessing when it comes. For we do not more desire to be blessed than God does to hear us importunate for blessing ; and he weighs every sigh, and bottles up every tear, and records every prayer, and looks through the cloud, with delight to see us upon our knees, and, when he sees his time, his light breaks through it, and shines upon us. Only we must not make our accounts for God according to the course of the sun, but the measures of eternity. He measures us by our needs, and we must not measure him by our impatience. “God is not slack, as some men count slackness,” saith the apostle ; and we find it so, when we have waited long. All the elapsed time is no part of the tediousness ; the trouble of it is past with itself : and for the future, we know not how little it may be ; for aught we know, we are already entered into the cloud that brings the blessing. However, pray till it comes : for we shall never miss to receive our desire, if it be holy, or innocent, and safe ; or else we are sure of a great reward of our prayers.

And in this, so determined, there is no danger of blasphemy, or vain repetitions : for those repetitions are vain which repeat the words, not the devotion, which renew the expression, and not the desire ; and he that may pray the same prayer to-morrow which he said to-day, may pray the same at night which he said in the morning, and the same at noon which he said at night, and so in all the hours of prayer, and in all the opportunities of devotion. Christ, in his agony, “went thrice, and said the same words,” but he had intervals for repetition ; and his need and his devotion pressed him forward : and whenever our needs do so, it is all one if we say the same words or others, so we express our desire, and tell our needs, and beg the remedy. In the same office, and the same hour of prayer, to repeat the same things often hath but few excuses to make it reasonable, and fewer to make it pious : but to think that the prayer is better for such repetition, is the fault which the holy Jesus condemned in the Gentiles, who in their hymns would say a name over a hundred times. But in this we have no rule to determine us in numbers and proportion, but right reason. God loves not any words the more for being said often ; and those repetitions which are unreasonable in prudent estimation, cannot in any account be esteemed pious. But where a reasonable cause allows the repetition, the same cause that makes it reasonable makes it also proper for devotion. He that speaks his needs, and expresses nothing but his fervour and greatness of desire, cannot be vain or long in his prayers ; he that speaks impertinently, that is, unreasonably and without desires, is long, though he speak but two syllables ; he that thinks for speaking much to be heard the sooner, thinks God is delighted in the labour of the lips :

but when reason is the guide, and piety is the rule, and necessity is the measure, and desire gives the proportion, let the prayer be very long; he that shall blame it for its length, must proclaim his disrelish both of reason and religion, his despite of necessity, and contempt of zeal.

As a part and instance of our importunity in prayer, it is usually reckoned and advised, that in cases of great, sudden, and violent need, we corroborate our prayers with a vow of doing something holy and religious in an uncommanded instance, something to which God had not formerly bound our duty, though fairly invited our will; or else, if we choose a duty in which we were obliged then to vow the doing of it in a more excellent manner, with a greater inclination of the will, with a more fervent repetition of the act, with some more noble circumstance, with a fuller assent of the understanding, or else adding a new promise to our old duty, to make it become more necessary to us, and to secure our duty. In this case, as it requires great prudence and caution in the susception, lest what we piously intend obtain a present blessing, and lay a lasting snare; so if it be prudent in the manner, holy in the matter, useful in the consequence, and safe in all the circumstances of the person, it is an endearing us and our prayer to God by the increase of duty and charity, and therefore a more probable way of making our prayers gracious and acceptable. And the religion of vows was not only hallowed by the example of Jacob at Bethel, of Hannah praying for a child, and God hearing her, of David vowing a temple to God, and made regular and safe by the rules and cautions in Moses' law; but left by our blessed Saviour in the same constitution he found it, he having innovated nothing in the matter of vows: and it was practised accordingly in the instance of St Paul at Cenchrea; of Ananias and Sapphira, who vowed their possessions to the use of the church; and of the widows in the apostolical age, who therefore vowed to remain in the state of widowhood, because concerning them who married after the entry into religion, St Paul says, "They have broken their first faith;" and such were they of whom our blessed Saviour affirms, "that some make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven," that is, such who promise to God a life of chastity. This can have no objection or suspicion in it among wise and disabused persons; for it can be nothing but an increasing and a renewed act of duty, or devotion, or zeal, or charity, and the importunity of prayer, acted in a more vital and real expression.

All else that is to be considered concerning prayer, is extrinsical and accidental to it. First: prayer is public, or private: in the communion or society of saints, or in our closets: these prayers have less temptation to vanity; the other have more advantages of charity, example, fervour, and energy. In public offices we avoid singularity, in the private we avoid hypocrisy: those are of more edification, these of greater retiredness and silence of spirit: those serve the needs of all the world in the first intention, and our own by consequence; these serve our own needs first, and the public only by a secondary intention: these have more pleasure, they more duty: these are the best instruments of repentance, where our confessions may be more particular, and our shame less scandalous; the other are better for eucharist and instruction, for edification of the church, and glorification of God.

Secondly: The posture of our bodies in prayer had as great variety as

the ceremonies and civilities of several nations came to. The Jews most commonly prayed standing: so did the Pharisee and the publican in the temple.* So did the primitive Christians, in all their greater festivals and intervals of jubilee; in their penances they kneeled. And in every country whatsoever, by the custom of the nation, was a symbol of reverence and humility, of silence and attention, of gravity and modesty, that posture they translated to their prayers. But, in all nations, bowing the head, that is, a laying down our glory at the feet of God, was the manner of worshippers: and this was always the more humble and the lower, as their devotion was higher; and was very often expressed by prostration, or lying flat upon the ground; and this all nations did, and all religions. Our deportment ought to be grave, decent, humble, apt for adoration, apt to edify; and when we address ourselves to prayer, not instantly to leap into the office, as the judges of the Areopage into their sentence, "without preface or preparatory affections;" but, considering in what presence we speak, and to what purposes, let us balance our fervour with reverential fear: and, when we have done, not rise from the ground as if we vaulted, or were glad we had done; but, as we begin with desires of assistance, so end with desires of pardon and acceptance, concluding our longer offices with a shorter mental prayer, of more private reflection and reverence designing to mend what we have done amiss, or to give thanks and proceed if we did well, and according to our powers.

Thirdly: In private prayers it is permitted to every man to speak his prayers, or only to think them, which is a speaking to God. Vocal or mental prayer is all one to God, but in order to us they have their several advantages. The sacrifice of the heart, and the calves of the lips, make up a holocaust to God: but words are the arrest of the desires, and keep the spirit fixed, and, in less permissions, to wander from fancy to fancy; and mental prayer is apt to make the greater fervour, if it wander not: our office is more determined by words; but we then actually think of God, when our spirits only speak. Mental prayer, when our spirits wander, is like a watch standing still, because the spring is down; wind it up again, and it goes on regularly: but in vocal prayer, if the words run on, and the spirit wanders, the clock strikes false, the hand points not to the right hour, because something is in disorder, and the striking is nothing but noise. In mental prayer, we confess God's omniscience; in vocal prayer, we call the angels to witness. In the first, our spirits rejoice in God; in the second, the angels rejoice in us. Mental prayer is the best remedy against lightness, and indifferency of affections; but vocal prayer is the aptest instrument of communion. That is more angelical, but yet fittest for the state of separation and glory; this is but human, but it is apter for our present constitution. They have their distinct proprieties, and may be used according to several accidents, occasions, or dispositions.

* Nehem. ix. 5. Mark, xi. 25. Luke, xviii. 11.

A HOLY LIFE MORE FREE FROM TROUBLE THAN A COURSE OF SIN.

IN the strict observances of the law of Christianity there is less trouble than in the habitual courses of sin. For if we consider the general design of Christianity, it propounds to us in this world nothing that is of difficult purchase, nothing beyond what God allots us, by the ordinary and common providence, such things which we are to receive without care and solicitous vexation: so that the ends are not big, and the way is easy; and this walked over with much simplicity and sweetness, and those obtained without difficulty. He that propounds to himself to live low, pious, humble, and retired, his main employment is nothing but sitting quiet, and undisturbed with variety of impertinent affairs: but he that loves the world, and its acquisitions, entertains a thousand businesses, and every business hath a world of employment, and every employment is multiplied, and made intricate by circumstances, and every circumstance is to be disputed, and he that disputes ever hath two sides in enmity and opposition; and by this time there is a genealogy, a long descent, and cognation of troubles branched into so many particulars, that it is troublesome to understand them, and much more to run through them. The ways of virtue are very much upon the defensive, and the work one, uniform and little; they are like war within a strong castle, if they stand upon their guard, they seldom need to strike a stroke. But a vice is like storming of a fort, full of noise, trouble, labour, danger, and disease. How easy a thing is it to restore the pledge! But if a man means to defeat him that trusted him, what a world of arts must he use to make pretences? To delay first, then to excuse, then to object, then to intricate the business, next to quarrel, then to forswear it, and all the way to palliate his crime, and represent himself honest. And if an oppressing and greedy person have a design to cozen a young heir, or to get his neighbour's land, the cares of every day, and the interruptions of every night's sleep, are more than the purchase is worth; since he might buy virtue at half that watching, and the less painful care of a fewer number of days. A plain story is soonest told, and best confutes an intricate lie; and when a person is examined in judgment, one false answer asks more wit for its support and maintenance than a history of truth. And such persons are put to so many shameful retreats, false colours, fucuses, and daubings with untempered mortar, to avoid contradiction or discovery, that the labour of a false story seems, in the order of things, to be designed the beginning of its punishment. And if we consider how great a part of our religion consists in prayer, and how easy a thing God requires of us, when he commands us to pray for blessings, the duty of a Christian cannot seem very troublesome.

And, indeed, I can hardly instance in any vice, but there is visibly more pain in the order of acting and observing it, than in the acquist or promotion of virtue. I have seen drunken persons, in their seas of drink and talk, dread every cup as a blow, and they have used devices and private arts, to escape the punishment of a full draught; and the poor wretch, being condemned, by the laws of drinking, to his measure, was forced and haled to execution; and he suffered it, and thought himself engaged to

that person, who, with much kindness and importunity, invited him to a fever. But, certainly, there was more pain in it, than in the strictness of holy and severe temperance. And he that shall compare the troubles and dangers of an ambitious war, with the gentleness and easiness of peace, will soon perceive, that every tyrant and usurping prince, that snatches at his neighbour's rights, hath two armies, one of men, and the other of cares. Peace sheds no blood, but of the pruned vine; and hath no business, but modest and quiet entertainments of the time, opportune for piety, and circled with reward. But God often punishes ambition and pride with lust; and he sent a "thorn in the flesh," as a corrective to the elevations and *grandezza* of St Paul, growing up from the multitude of his revelations: and it is not likely the punishment should have less trouble than the crime, whose pleasures and obliquity this was designed to punish. And, indeed, every experience can verify, that an adulterer hath in him the impatience of desires, the burnings of lust, the fear of shame, the apprehensions of a jealous, abused, and an enraged husband. He endures affronts, mistinnings, tedious waitings, the dulness of delay, the regret of interruption, the confusion and amazements of discovery, the scorn of a reproached vice, the debasings of contempt upon it; unless the man grows impudent, and then he is more miserable upon another stock. But David was so put to it, to attempt, to obtain, to enjoy Bathsheba, and to prevent the shame of it, that the difficulty was greater than all his wit and power; and it drove him into base and unworthy arts, which discovered him the more, and multiplied his crime. But while he enjoyed the innocent pleasures of his lawful bed, he had no more trouble in it, then there was in inclining his head upon his pillow. The ways of sin are crooked, desert, rocky, and uneven: they are broad, indeed; and there is variety of ruins, and allurements, to entice fools, and a large theatre to act the bloody tragedies of souls upon; but they are nothing smooth, or safe, or delicate. The ways of virtue are strait, but not crooked; narrow, but not unpleasant. There are two vices for one virtue; and, therefore, the way to hell must needs be of greater extent, latitude, and dissemination: but, because virtue is but one way, therefore it is easy, regular, and apt to walk in, without error or diversions. "Narrow is the gate, and strait is the way:" it is true, considering our evil customs and depraved natures, by which we have made it so to us. But God hath made it more passable, by his grace and present aids; and St John the Baptist receiving his commission to preach repentance, it was expressed in these words: "Make plain the paths of the Lord." Indeed, repentance is a rough and a sharp virtue, and, like a mattock and spade, breaks away all the roughnesses of the passage, and hinderances of sin; but when we enter into the dispositions, which Christ hath designed to us, the way is more plain and easy than the ways of death and hell. Labour it hath in it, just as all things that are excellent; but no confusions, no distractions of thought, no amazements, no labyrinths, and intricacy of counsels; but it is like the labours of agriculture, full of health and simplicity, plain and profitable; requiring diligence, but such in which crafts and painful stratagems are useless and impertinent. But vice hath oftentimes so troublesome a retinue, and so many objections in the event of things, is so entangled in difficult and contradictory circumstances, hath in it parts so opposite to each other, and so inconsistent with the present condition of the man, or some secret design of his, that those

little pleasures, which are its fucus and pretence, are less perceived and least enjoyed, while they begin in fantastic semblances, and rise up in smoke, vain and hurtful, and end in dissatisfaction.

But it is considerable, that God, and the sinner, and the devil, all join in increasing the difficulty and trouble of sin ; upon contrary designs, indeed, but all co-operate to the verification of this discourse. For God, by his restraining grace, and the checks of a tender conscience, and the bands of public honesty, and the sense of honour and reputation, and the customs of nations, and the severities of laws, makes, that in most men, the choice of vice is imperfect, dubious, and troublesome, and the pleasures abated, and the apprehensions various, and in differing degrees : and men act their crimes, while they are disputing against them, and the balance is cast by a few grains, and scruples vex and disquiet the possession ; and the difference is perceived to be so little, that inconsideration and inadvertency is the greatest means to determine many men to the entertainment of a sin. And this God does, with a design to lessen our choice, and to disabuse our persuasions from arguments and weak pretences of vice, and to invite us to the trials of virtue, when we see its enemy giving us so ill conditions. And yet the sinner himself makes the business of sin greater ; for its nature is so loathsome, and its pleasure so little, and its promises so unperformed, that when it lies open, easy, and apt to be discerned, there is no argument in it ready to invite us ; and men hate a vice, which is every day offered and prostituted ; and when they seek for pleasure, unless difficulty presents it, as there is nothing in it really to persuade a choice, so there is nothing strong or witty enough to abuse a man. And to this purpose, (amongst some others, which are malicious and crafty,) the devil gives assistance, knowing that men despise what is cheap and common, and suspect a latent excellency to be in difficult and forbidden objects : and, therefore, the devil sometimes crosses an opportunity of sin, knowing that the desire is the iniquity, and does his work sufficiently ; and yet the crossing the desire, by impeding the act, heightens the appetite, and makes it more violent and impatient. But by all these means, sin is made more troublesome than the pleasures of the temptation can account for : and it will be a strange imprudence to leave virtue, upon pretence of its difficulty, when, for that very reason, we the rather entertain the instances of sin, despising a cheap sin and a costly virtue : choosing to walk through the brambles of a desert, rather than to climb the fruit-trees of paradise.

CHRIST'S PREPARATION FOR HIS PASSION.

HE that hath observed the story of the life of Jesus, cannot but see it all the way to be strewed with thorns and sharp-pointed stones ; and although by the kisses of his feet they became precious and salutary, yet they procured to him sorrow and disease : it was "meat and drink to him to do his Father's will," but it was "bread of affliction, and rivers of tears to drink ;" and for these he thirsted like the earth after the cool stream. For so great was his perfection, so exact the conformity of his will, so absolute the

subordination of his inferior faculties to the infinite love of God, which sat regent in the court of his will and understanding, that, in this election of accidents, he never considered the taste but the goodness, never distinguished sweet from bitter, but duty and piety always prepared his table. And, therefore, now knowing that his time, determined by the Father, was nigh, he hastened up to Jerusalem; "he went before" his disciples, saith St Mark, "and they followed him trembling and amazed;" and yet, before that, even then when his brethren observed he had a design of publication of himself, he suffered them "to go before him, and went up, as it were, in secret." For so we are invited to martyrdom and suffering in a Christian cause, by so great an example: the holy Jesus is gone before us, and it were a holy contention, to strive whose zeal were forwardest in the designs of humiliation and self-denial; but it were also well, if, in doing ourselves secular advantage, and promoting our worldly interest, we should follow him, who was ever more distant from receiving honours than from receiving a painful death. Those affections, which dwell in sadness, and are married to grief, and lie at the foot of the cross, and trace the sad steps of Jesus, have the wisdom of recollection, the tempers of sobriety, and are the best imitations of Jesus, and securities against the levity of a dispersed and a vain spirit. This was intimated by many of the disciples of Jesus, in the days of the Spirit, and, when they had "tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" for then we find many ambitious of martyrdom, and that have laid stratagems and designs, by unusual death, to get a crown. The soul of St Lawrence was so scorched with ardent desires of dying for his Lord, that he accounted the coals of his gridiron but as a julep, or the aspersion of cold water, to refresh his soul; they were chill as the Alpine snows, in respect of the heats of his diviner flames. And if these lesser stars shine so brightly, and burn so warmly, what heat of love may we suppose to have been in the Sun of Righteousness? If they went fast toward the crown of martyrdom, yet we know that the Holy Jesus went before them all: no wonder that "he cometh forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course."

When the disciples had overtaken Jesus, he begins to read them a sad homily upon the old text of suffering, which he had, well nigh for a year together, preached upon; but because it was an unpleasing lesson, so contradictory to those interests, upon the hopes of which they had entertained themselves, and spent all their desires, they could by no means understand it: for an understanding, prepossessed with a fancy, or an unhandsome principle, construes all other notions to the sense of the first: and whatsoever contradicts it, we think it an objection, and that we are bound to answer it. But now that it concerned Christ to speak so plainly, that his disciples, by what was to happen within five or six days, might not be scandalized, or believe it happened to Jesus without his knowledge and voluntary entertainment, he tells them of his sufferings, to be accomplished in this journey to Jerusalem. And here the disciples showed themselves to be but men, full of passion and indiscreet affection; and the bold Galilean, St Peter, had the boldness to dehort his Master from so great an infelicity; and met with a reprehension so great, that neither the Scribes, nor the Pharisees, nor Herod himself, ever met with its parallel: Jesus called him Satan; meaning, that no greater contradiction can be offered to

the designs of God and his holy Son, than to dissuade us from suffering. And if we understood how great are the advantages of a suffering condition, we should think all our daggers gilt, and our pavements strewed with roses, and our halters silken, and the rack an instrument of pleasure, and be most impatient of those temptations which seduce us into ease, and divorce us from the cross, as being opposite to our greatest hopes and most perfect desires. But still this humour of St Peter's imperfection abides amongst us : he that breaks off the yoke of obedience, and unties the bands of discipline, and preaches a cheap religion, and presents heaven in the midst of flowers, and strews carpets softer than the Asian luxury in the way, and sets the songs of Sion to the tunes of Persian and lighter airs, and offers great liberty of living, and bondage under affection and sins, and reconciles eternity with the present enjoyment, he shall have his schools filled with disciples ; but he that preaches the cross and the severities of Christianity, and the strictnesses of a holy life, shall have the lot of his blessed Lord ; he shall be thought ill of, and deserted.

Our blessed Lord, five days before his passion, sent his disciples to a village to borrow an ass, that he might ride in triumph to Jerusalem ; he had none of his own ; but yet he, who was so dear to God, could not want what was to supply his needs. It may be, God hath laid up our portion in the repositories of other men, and means to furnish us from their tables, to feed us from their granaries, and that their wardrobe shall clothe us ; for it is all one to him to make a fish bring us money, or a crow to bring us meat, or the stable of our neighbour to furnish our needs of beasts. If he brings it to thy need as thou wantest it, thou hast all the good in the use of the creature which the owners can receive ; and the horse which is lent me in charity does me as much ease, and the bread which is given me in alms feeds me as well, as the other part of it, which the good man, that gave me a portion, reserved for his own eating, could do to him. And if we would give God leave to make provision for us in the ways of his own choosing, and not estimate our wants by our manner of receiving, being contented that God, by any of his own ways, will minister it to us, we should find our cares eased, and our content increased, and our thankfulness engaged, and all our moderate desires contented, by the satisfaction of our needs. For if God is pleased to feed me by my neighbour's charity, there is no other difference, but that God makes me an occasion of his ghostly good, as he is made the occasion of my temporal ; and if we think it a disparagement, we may remember, that God conveys more good to him by me, than to me by him : and it is a proud impatience to refuse, or to be angry with God's provisions, because he hath not observed my circumstances and ceremonies of election.

And now begins that great triumph, in which the holy Jesus was pleased to exalt his office, and to abase his person. He rode, like a poor man, upon an ass, a beast of burden and the lowest value, and yet it was not his own ; and in that equipage he received the acclamations due to a mighty prince, to the Son of the eternal King ; telling us, that the smallness of fortune, and the rudeness of exterior habiliments and a rough wall, are sometimes the outsides of a great glory : and that when God means to glorify or do honour to a person, he needs no help from secular advantages. He hides great riches in renunciation of the world, and makes great honour break forth from the clouds of humility ; and victory to arise from yield-

ing, and the modesty of departing from our interest ; and peace to be the reward of him, that suffers all the hostilities of men and devils. For Jesus, in this great humility of his, gives a great probation that he was the Messias, and the King of Sion ; because no other king entered into those gates riding upon an ass, and received the honour of “ Hosannah,” in that unlikelihood and contradiction of unequal circumstances.

The blessed Jesus had never but two days of triumph in his life : the one was on his transfiguration upon Mount Tabor ; the other, this his riding into the holy city. But, that it may appear how little were his joys and present exterior complacencies ; in the day of his transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared to him, telling him what great things he was to suffer ; and in this day of his riding to Jerusalem, he wet the palms with a dew sweeter than the moistures upon Mount Hermon, or the drops of manna : for, to allay the little warmth of a springing joy he let down a shower of tears, weeping over undone Jerusalem in the day of his triumph, leaving it disputable whether he felt more joy or sorrow in the acts of love ; for he triumphed to consider that the redemption of the world was so near, and wept bitterly that men would not be redeemed ; his joy was great, to consider that himself was to suffer so great sadness for our good ; and his sorrow was very great, to consider that we would not entertain that good, that he brought and laid before us by his passion. He was in figure, as his servant, St Paphnutius, was afterwards, in letter and true story, “ crucified upon palms :” which, indeed, was the emblem of a victory ; but yet such as had leaves sharp, poignant, and vexatious. However, he entered into Jerusalem dressed in gayeties, which yet he placed under his feet ; but with such pomps and solemnities, each family, according to its proportion, was accustomed to bring the paschal lamb to be slain for the pass-over : and it was not an indecent ceremony, that “ the lamb slain from the beginning of the world ” should be brought to his slaughter with the acknowledgments of a religious solemnity ; because, now that real good was to be exhibited to the world, which those little paschal lambs did but signify and represent in shadow : and that was the true cause of all the little joy he had.

And if we consider what followed, it might seem also to be a design to heighten the dolorousness of his passion : for to descend from the greatest of worldly honours, from the adoration of a God, and the acclamations to a king, to the death of a slave, and the torments of a cross, and the dishonours of a condemned criminal, were so great stoopings and vast changes, that they gave height, and sense, and excellency to each other. This, then, seemed an excellent glory ; but, indeed, was but an art and instrument of grief : for such is the nature of all our felicities, they end in sadness, and increase the sting of sorrows, and add moment to them, and cause impatience and uncomfortable remembrances ; but the griefs of a Christian, whether they be instances of repentance, or parts of persecution, or exercises of patience, end in joy and endless comfort. Thus, Jesus, like a rainbow, half made of the glories of light, and half of the moisture of a cloud ; half triumph, and half sorrow ; entered into that town where he had done much good to others, and to himself received nothing but affronts : yet his tenderness increased upon him ; and that very journey, which was Christ’s last solemn visit for their recovery, he doubled all the instruments of his mercy and their conversion. He rode in triumph ; the

children sang hosannah to him ; he cured many diseased persons ; he wept for them, and pitied them, and sighed out the intimations of a prayer, and did penance for their ingratitude, and staid all day there, looking about him towards evening ; and no man would invite him home, but he was forced to go to Bethany where he was sure of an hospitable entertainment. I think no Christian that reads this, but will be full of indignation at the whole city ; who, for malice or for fear, would not, or durst not, receive their Saviour into their houses ; and yet we do worse : for now that he is become our Lord, with mightier demonstrations of his eternal power, we suffer him to look round about upon us for months and years together, and possibly never entertain him, till our house is ready to rush upon our heads, and we are going to unusual and stranger habitations. And yet, in the midst of a populous and mutinous city, this great King had some good subjects ; persons that threw away their own garments, and laid them at the feet of our Lord ; that being divested of their own, they might be re-invested with a robe of his righteousness, wearing that till it were changed into a stole of glory : the very ceremony of their reception of the Lord became symbolical to them, and expressive of all our duties.

But I consider that the blessed Jesus had affections not less than infinite, towards all mankind ; and he who wept upon Jerusalem, who had done so great despite to him, and within five days were to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and do an act, which all ages of the world could never repeat in the same instance, did also, in the number of his tears, reckon our sins, as sad considerations and incentives of his sorrow. And it would well become us to consider what great evil we do, when our actions are such as for which our blessed Lord did weep. He who was seated in the bosom of felicity, yet moistened his fresh laurels upon the day of his triumph, with tears of love and bitter alloy. His day of triumph was a day of sorrow ; and if we would weep for our sins, that instance of sorrow would be a day of triumph and jubilee.

From hence the holy Jesus went to Bethany, where he had another manner of reception than at the holy city. There he supped ; for his goodly day of triumph had been with him a fasting day. And Mary who had spent one box of nard pistie upon our Lord's feet, as a sacrifice of eucharist for her conversion, now bestowed another, in thankfulness for the restitution of her brother Lazarus to life, and consigned her Lord unto his burial. And here she met with an evil interpreter. Judas, an apostle, one of the Lord's own family, pretended it had been a better religion to have given it to the poor ; but it was malice, and the spirit, either of envy or avarice in him that passed that sentence ; for he that sees a pious action well done, and seeks to undervalue it by telling how it might have been better, reproves nothing but his own spirit. For a man may do very well, and God may accept it ; though to say he might have done better, is to say only, that action was not the most perfect and absolute in its kind : but to be angry at a religious person, and without any other pretence but that he might have done better, is spiritual envy ; for a pious person would have nourished up that infant action by love and praise, till it had grown to the most perfect and intelligent piety. But the event of that man gave the interpretation of his present purpose ; and at the best it could be no other than a rash judgment of the action and intention of a religious, thankful, holy person. But she found her Lord, who was her beneficiary in this, become her patron and her advocate. And

hereafter, when we shall find the devil, the great accuser of God's saints, object against the piety and religion of holy persons ; a cup of cold water shall be accepted unto reward, and a good intention heightened to the value of an exterior expression, and a piece of gum to the equality of a holocaust ; and an action, done with great zeal and an intense love, be acquitted from all its adherent imperfections ; Christ receiving them unto himself, and being like the altar of incense, hallowing the very smoke, and raising it into a flame, and entertaining it into the embraces of the firmament and the bosom of heaven. Christ himself, who is the judge of our actions, is also the entertainer and object of our charity and duty, and the advocate of our persons.

Judas, who declaimed against the woman, made tacit reflections upon his Lord for suffering it : and, indeed, every obloquy against any of Christ's servants, is looked on as an arrow shot into the heart of Christ himself. And now, a persecution being begun against the Lord within his own family, another was raised against him from without. For the chief priests "took crafty counsel against Jesus," and called a consistory, to contrive "how they might destroy him : " and here was the greatest representment of the goodness of God and the ingratitude of man that could be practised or understood. How often had Jesus poured forth tears for them ! How many sleepless nights had he awaked, to do them advantage ! How many days had he spent in homilies, and admirable visitations of mercy and charity ; in casting out devils, in curing their sick, in correcting their delinquencies, in reducing them to the ways of security and peace ; and, that we may use the greatest expression in the world, that is, his own, "in gathering them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," to give them strength, and warmth, and life, and ghostly nourishment ! And the chief priests, together with their faction, use all arts, and watch all opportunities to get Christ ; not that they might possess him, but to destroy him ; little considering that they extinguish their own eyes, and destroy that spring of life, which was intended to them for a blissful immortality.

And here it was that the devil showed his promptness, to furnish every evil-intended person with apt instruments, to act the very worst of his intentions. The devil knew their purposes, and the aptness and proclivity of Judas ; and, by bringing these together, he served their present design, and his own great intendment. The devil never fails to promote every evil purpose ; and, except where God's restraining grace does intervene and interrupt the opportunity, by interposition of different and cross accidents to serve other ends of Providence, no man easily is fond of wickedness, but he shall receive enough to ruin him. Indeed, Nero and Julian, both witty men and powerful, desired to have been magicians, and could not : and although, possibly, the devil would have corresponded with them, who yet were already his own, in all degrees of security : yet God permitted not that, lest they might have understood new ways of doing despite to martyrs and afflicted Christians. And it concerns us not to tempt God, or invite a forward enemy ; for as we are sure the devil is ready to promote all vicious desires, and bring them out to execution : so we are not sure, that God will not permit him ; and he that desires to be undone, and cares not to be prevented by God's restraining grace, shall find his ruin in the folly of his own desires, and become wretched by his own election. Judas, hear-

ing of this congregation of the priests, went and offered to betray his Lord, and made a covenant, the price of which was "thirty pieces of silver;" and he returned.

It is not intimated in the history of the life of Jesus, that Judas had any malice against the person of Christ; for when, afterwards, he saw the matter was to end in the death of his Lord, he repented: but a base and unworthy spirit of covetousness possessed him: and the relics of indignation, for missing the price of the ointment which the holy Mary had poured upon his feet, burnt in his bowels, with a secret, dark, melancholic fire, and made an eruption into an act, which all ages of the world could never parallel. They appointed him for hire thirty pieces, and some say, that every piece did in value equal ten ordinary current deniers; and so Judas was satisfied, by receiving the worth of the three hundred pence, at which he valued the nard pistie. But hereafter, let no Christian be ashamed to be despised and undervalued; for he will hardly meet so great a reproach, as to have so disproportioned a price set upon his life, as was upon the holy Jesus. Mary thought it not good enough to anneal his sacred feet; Judas thought it a sufficient price for his head: for covetousness aims at base and low purchases, whilst holy love is great and comprehensive as the bosom of heaven, and aims at nothing that is less than infinite. The love of God is a holy fountain, limpid and pure, sweet and salutary, lasting and eternal: the love of money is a vertiginous pool, sucking all into it to destroy it; it is troubled and uneven, giddy and unsafe, serving no end but its own, and that, also, in a restless and uneasy motion. The love of God spends itself upon him, to receive again the reflections of grace and benediction: the love of money spends all its desires upon itself, to purchase nothing but unsatisfying instruments of exchange, or supernumerary provisions, and ends in dissatisfaction, and emptiness of spirit, and a bitter curse. Mary was defended by her Lord against calumny, and rewarded with an honourable mention to all ages of the church: besides the "unction from above," which she shortly after received, to consign her to crowns and sceptres: but Judas was described in the Scripture, the book of life, with the black character of death; he was disgraced to eternal ages, and presently after acted his own tragedy with a sad and ignoble death.

Now, all things being fitted, our blessed Lord sends two disciples to prepare the passover, that he might fulfill the law of Moses, and pass from thence to institutions evangelical, and then fulfill his sufferings. Christ gave them a sign to guide them to the house, "a man bearing a pitcher of water;" by which some, that delight in mystical significations, say was typified the sacrament of baptism: meaning, that although, by occasion of the paschal solemnity, the holy eucharist was first instituted, yet it was afterwards to be applied to practice according to the sense of this accident: only baptized persons were apt suscipients of the other more perfective rite, as the taking nutriment supposes persons born into the world, and within the common conditions of human nature. But, in the letter, it was an instance of the Divine omniscience, who could pronounce concerning accidents at a distance, as if they were present: and yet also, like the provision of the colt to ride on, it was an instance of Providence, and security of all God's sons for their portion of temporals. Jesus had not a lamb of his own, and possibly no money in the bags to buy one: and yet Providence was his guide, and the charity of a good man was his provider,

and he found excellent conveniences in the entertainments of a hospitable good man, as if he had dwelt in Ahab's ivory house, and had had the riches of Solomon, and the meat of his household.

THE PRAYER.

O HOLY King of Sion, eternal Jesus, who, with great humility and infinite love, didst enter into the holy city, riding upon an ass, that thou mightest verify the predictions of the prophets, and give example of meekness, and of the gentle and paternal government which the eternal Father laid upon thy shoulders ; be pleased, dearest Lord, to enter into my soul with triumph, trampling over all thine enemies : and give me grace to entertain thee with joy and adoration, with abjection of my own desires, with lopping off all my superfluous branches of a temporal condition, and spending them in the offices of charity and religion, and divesting myself of all my desires, laying them at thy holy feet, that I may bear the yoke and burden of the Lord with alacrity, with love, and the wonders of a satisfied and triumphant spirit. Lord, enter in, and take possession ; and thou, to whose honour the very stones would give testimony, make my stony heart an instrument of thy praises ; let me strew thy way with flowers of virtue, and the holy rosary of Christian graces : and, by thy aid and example, let us also triumph over all our infirmities and hostilities, and then lay our victories at thy feet, and at last follow thee into thy heavenly Jerusalem with palms in our hands, and joy in our hearts, and eternal acclamations on our lips, rejoicing in thee, and singing Hallelujahs in a happy eternity to thee, O holy King of Sion, eternal Jesus. Amen.

II.

O BLESSED and dear Lord, who wert pleased to permit thyself to be sold to the assemblies of evil persons for a vile price by one of thy own servants, for whom thou hadst done so great favours, and hadst designed a crown and a throne to him, and he turned himself into a sooty coal, and entered into the portion of evil angels ; teach us to value thee above all the joys of men, to prize thee at an estimate beyond all the wealth of nature, to buy wisdom, and not to sell it, to part with all, that we may enjoy thee : and let no temptation abuse our understandings, no loss vex us into impatience, no frustration of hope fill us with indignation, no pressure of calamitous accidents make us angry at thee, the fountain of love and blessing, no covetousness transport us into the suburbs of hell, and the regions of sin ; but make us to love thee as well as ever any creature loved thee, that we may never burn in any fires but of a holy love, nor sink in any inundation but what proceeds from penitential showers, and suffer no violence but of implacable desires to live with thee, and, when thou callest us, to suffer with thee, and for thee.

III.

LORD, let me never be betrayed by myself, or any violent accident and importunate temptation ; let me never be sold for the vile price of temporal gain, or transient pleasure, or a pleasant dream ; but, since thou hast

bought me with a price, even then when thou wert sold thyself, let me never be separated from thy possession. I am thine, bought with a price; Lord, save me; and in the day when thou bindest up thy jewels, remember, Lord, that I cost thee as dear as any, and therefore cast me not into the portion of Judas; but let me walk, and dwell, and bathe in the field of thy blood, and pass from hence, pure and sanctified, into the society of the elect apostles, receiving my part with them, and my lot in the communications of thy inheritance, O gracious Lord and dearest Saviour, Jesus. Amen.

ON THE PROPER MANNER OF RECEIVING THE HOLY SACRAMENT.

ST PAUL hath given us instruction in this: "First, let a man examine himself, and so let him eat: for he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."* That is, although, in the church of Corinth, by reason of the present schism, the public discipline of the church was neglected, and every man permitted to himself; yet, even then, no man was disobliged from his duty of private repentance, and holy preparations, to the perception of so great a mystery; that "the Lord's body" may be discerned from common nutriment. Now, nothing can so unhallow and desecrate the rite, as the remanent affection to a sin, or a crime unrepented of. And self-examination is prescribed, not for itself, but in order to abolition of sin and death: for itself is a relative term and an imperfect duty, whose very nature is in order to something beyond it. And this was, in the primitive church, understood in so much severity, that if a man had relapsed, after one public repentance, into a foul crime, he was never again re-admitted to the holy communion; and the fathers of the council of Iliberis call it a mocking and jesting at the communion of our Lord, to give it once again, after a repentance and a relapse, and a second or third postulation. And, indeed, we use to make a sport of the greatest instruments of religion, when we come to them after an habitual vice, whose face we have, it may be, wetted with a tear, and breathed upon it with a sigh, and abstained from the worst of crimes for two or three days, and come to the sacrament to be purged, and to take our rise by going a little back from our sin, that afterwards we may leap into it with more violence, and enter into its utmost angle: this is dishonouring the body of our Lord, and deceiving ourselves. Christ and Belial cannot cohabit; unless we have left all our sins, and have no fondness of affection towards them, unless we hate them, (which then we shall best know when we leave them, and with complacency entertain their contraries :) then Christ hath washed our feet, and then he invites us to his holy supper. Hands dipped in blood, or polluted with unlawful gains, or stained with the spots of flesh, are most unfit to handle the holy body of our Lord, and minister nourishment to the soul. Christ loves not to enter into the mouth full of cursings, oaths, blasphemies, revilings, or evil speakings; and a

* 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

heart full of vain and vicious thoughts, stinks like the lake of Sodom; he finds no rest there, and when he enters, he is vexed with the unclean conversation of the impure inhabitants, and flies from thence with the wings of a dove, that he may retire to purer and whiter habitations. St Justin Martyr, reckoning the predispositions required of every faithful soul for the entertainment of his Lord, says, that "it is not lawful for any to eat the eucharist, but to him that is washed in the laver of regeneration for the remission of sins, that believes Christ's doctrine to be true, and that lives according to the discipline of the holy Jesus. For this holy sacrament is a nourishment of spiritual life, and, therefore, cannot with effect be ministered to them who are in the state of spiritual death; it is giving a cordial to a dead man; and, although the outward rite be ministered, yet the grace of the sacrament is not communicated; and, therefore, it were well that they also abstained from the rite itself. For a fly can boast of as much privilege, as a wicked person can receive from this holy feast, and oftentimes pays his life for his access to forbidden delicacies, as certainly as they.

It is more generally thought by the doctors of the church, that our blessed Lord administered the sacrament to Judas, although he knew he sold him to the Jews. Some others deny it, and suppose Judas departed presently after the sop given him before he communicated. However it was, Christ, who was Lord of the sacraments, might dispense it as he pleased: but we must minister and receive it according to the rules he hath since described: but it becomes a precedent to the church in all succeeding ages, although it might also have in it something extraordinary, and apter to the first institution; for, because the fact of Judas was secret, not yet made notorious, Christ chose rather to admit him into the rites of external communion than to separate him with an open shame, for a fault not yet made open. For our blessed Lord did not reveal the man and his crime, till the very time of ministration, if Judas did communicate. But if Judas did not communicate, and that our blessed Lord gave him the sop at the paschal supper, or at the interval between it and the institution of his own, it is certain that Judas went out as soon as he was discovered, and left this part of discipline upon record, That when a crime is made public and notorious, the governors of the church, according to their power, are to deny to give the blessed sacrament, till by repentance such persons be restored. In private sins, or sins not known by solemnities of law, or evidence of fact, good and bad are entertained in public communion; and it is not to be accounted a crime in them that minister it, because they cannot avoid it, or have not competent authority to separate persons, whom the public act of the church hath not separated: but if once a public separation be made, or that the fact is notorious, and the sentence of law is in such cases already declared; they that come, and he that rejects them not, both pollute the blood of the everlasting covenant. And here it is applicable, what God spake by the prophet: "If thou wilt separate the precious thing from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." *

But this is wholly a matter of discipline, arbitrary, and in the power of the church; nothing in it of Divine commandment, but what belongs to the communicants themselves: for St Paul reproves them that receive disor-

* Jer. xv. 19.

derly, but gives no orders to the Corinthian presbyters to reject any that present themselves. Neither did our blessed Lord leave any commandment concerning it, nor hath the holy Scripture given rules or measures concerning its actual reduction to practice ; neither who are to be separated, nor for what offences, nor by what authority, nor who is to be the judge. And, indeed, it is a judgment that can only belong to God, who knows the secrets of hearts, the degrees of every sin, the beginnings and portions of repentance, the sincerity of purposes, by what thoughts and designs men begin to be accepted, who are hypocrites, and who are true men. But when many and common men come to judge, they are angry upon trifling mistakes and weak disputes ; they call that sin that angers their party, or grieves their interest ; they turn charity into pride, and admonition into tyranny ; they set up a tribunal that themselves may sit higher, not that their brethren may walk more securely : and then concerning sins, in most cases, they are most incompetent judges ; they do not know all their kinds ; they miscall many ; they are ignorant of the ingredient and constituent parts and circumstances ; they themselves make false measures, and give out according to them, when they please ; and when they list not, they can change the balance. When the matter is public, evident, and notorious, the man is to be admonished of his danger by the minister, but not, by him, to be forced from it : for the power of the minister of holy things is but the power of a preacher and a counsellor, of a physician and a guide ; it hath in it no coercion or violence, but what is indulged to it by human laws, and by consent, which may vary as its principle.

Add to this, that the grace of God can begin the work of repentance in an instant, and in what period or degree of repentance the holy communion is to be administered, no law of God declares ; which, therefore, plainly allows it to every period, and leaves no difference, except where the discipline of the church, and the authority of the supreme power, doth intervene. For since we do not find in Scripture that the apostles did drive from the communion of holy things, even those whom they delivered over to Satan or other censures, we are left to consider that, in the nature of the thing, those who are in the state of weakness and infirmity, have more need of the solemn prayers of the church, and, therefore, by presenting themselves to the holy sacrament, approach towards that ministry, which is the most effectual cure ; especially since the very presenting themselves is an act of religion, and, therefore, supposes an act of repentance and faith, and other little introductions to its fair reception ; and if they may be prayed for, and prayed with, why they may not also be communicated with, which is the solemnity of the greatest prayer, is not yet clearly revealed.

The surest way, most agreeable to the precedents of Scripture, and the analogy of the Gospel, is that, “ by the word of their proper ministry,” all sinners should be separate from the holy communion, that is threatened by the words of God with damnation and fearful temporal dangers, if themselves, knowing an unrepented sin, and a remanent affection to sin, to be within them, shall dare to profane that body and blood of our Lord by so impure an address. The evil is to themselves ; and if the ministers declare this powerfully, they are acquitted.

The duty of preparation, that I here discourse of, is such a preparation as is a disposition to life ; it is not a matter of convenience or advantage to repent of our sins before the communion ; but it is of absolute necessity,

we perish if we neglect it ; for we “ eat damnation,” and Satan enters into us, not Christ. And this preparation is not the act of a day or a week ; but it is a new state of life : no man, that is a habitual sinner, must come to this feast, till he hath wholly changed his course of life. And then, according as the actions of infirmity have made less or greater invasion upon his peace and health, so are the acts of repentance to be proportioned ; in which the greatness of the prevarications, their neighbourhood to death, or their frequent repetition, and the conduct of a spiritual man, are to give us counsel and determination. When a ravening and hungry wolf is destitute of prey, he eats the turf, and loads his stomach with the glebe he treads on ; but as soon as he finds better food, he vomits up his first load. Our secular and sensual affections are loads of earth upon the conscience ; and when we approach the table of the Lord, to eat the bread of the elect, and to drink the wine of angels, we must reject such impure adhesions, that holy persons, being nourished with holy symbols, may be sanctified, and receive the eternal reward of holiness.

But as none must come hither but they that are in the state of grace, or charity, and the love of God and their neighbours, and that the abolition of the state of sin is the necessary preparation, and is the action of years, and was not accepted as sufficient, till the expiration of divers years by the primitive discipline, and, in some cases, not till the approach of death : so there is another preparation, which is of less necessity, which supposes the state of grace, and that oil is burning in our lamps ; but yet it is a preparation of ornament, a trimming up the soul, a dressing the spirit with degrees and instances of piety, and progresses of perfection : and it consists in setting apart some portion of our time, before the communion, that it be spent in prayer, in meditations, in renewing the vows of holy obedience, in examining our consciences, in mortifying our lesser irregularities, in devotions and actions of precise religion, in acts of faith, of hope, of charity, of zeal and holy desires, in acts of eucharist or thanksgiving, of joy at the approach of so blessed an opportunity, and all the acts of virtue whatsoever, which have indefinite relation to this and to other mysteries ; but yet are specially to be exercised upon this occasion, because this is the most perfect of external rites, and the most mysterious instrument of sanctification and perfection. There is no more time or degree to be determined in this preparation ; but they “ to whom much is forgiven, will love much ;” and they—who understand the excellence and holiness of the mystery, the glory of the guest that comes to inhabit, and the indecency of the closet of their hearts, by reason of the adherences of impurity, the infinite benefit then designed, and the increase of degrees by the excellence of these previous acts of holiness—will not be too inquisitive into the necessity of circumstances and measures, but do it heartily and devoutly, and reverently, and as much as they can, ever esteeming it necessary, that actions of so great solemnity, should by some actions of piety, attending like handmaids, be distinguished from common employments, and remarked for the principal and most solemn of religious actions. The sum is this : After the greatest consociation of religious duties for preparation, no man can be sufficiently worthy to communicate : let us take care that we be not unworthy, by bringing a guilt with us, or the remanent affection to a sin.

When the happy hour is come, in which the Lord vouchsafes to enter

into us, and dwell with us, and be united with his servants, we must then do the same acts over again with greater earnestness and intension; confess the glories of God and thy own unworthiness, praise his mercy with ecstasy of thanksgiving and joy, make oblation of thyself, of all thy faculties and capacities, pray and read, and meditate, and worship: and that thou mayest more opportunely do all this, rise early to meet the bridegroom, pray for a special assistance, enter into the assembly of faithful people cheerfully, attend there diligently, demean thyself reverently, and, before any other meat or drink, receive the body of thy Saviour with pure hands, with holy intention, with a heart full of joy, and faith, and hope, and wonder, and eucharist. These things, I, therefore, set down irregularly and without method, because, in these actions, no rule can be given to all persons; and only such a love, and such a religion, in general, is to be recommended, which will overrun the banks, and not easily stand confined within the margin of rules, and artificial prescriptions. Love and religion are boundless, and all acts of grace, relating to the present mystery, are fit and proportioned entertainments of our Lord. This only remember, that we are, by the mystery of "one bread," confederated into one body, and the communion of saints, and that the sacrifice, which we then commemorate, was designed by our Lord, for the benefit of all his church: let us be sure to draw all faithful people into the society of the present blessing, joining with the holy man that ministers, in prayers, and offerings of that mystery, for the benefit of all sorts of men of Christ's catholic church. And it were also an excellent act of Christian communion, and agreeable to the practice of the church in all ages, to make an oblation to God for the poor; that, as we are fed by Christ's body, so we also should feed Christ's body, making such returns as we can,—a grain of frankincense in exchange for a province, an act of duty and Christian charity as eucharistical for the present grace, that all the body may rejoice and glory in the salvation of the Lord.

After thou hast received that pledge of immortality and antepast of glory, even the Lord's body in a mystery, leave not thy Saviour there alone, but attend him with holy thoughts and colloquies of prayer and eucharist. But in this every man best knows his own opportunities and necessities of diversion. I only commend earnestly to practice, that every receiver should make a recollection of himself, and the actions of the day, that he improve it to the best advantage, that he show unto our Lord all the defects of his house, all his poverty and weaknesses: and this let every man do, by such actions and devotions which he can best attend, and himself, by the advice of a spiritual man, finds of best advantage. I would not make the practice of religion, especially in such irregular instances, to be an art, or a burden, or a snare, to scrupulous persons: what St Paul said in the case of charity I say also in this; "He that sows plentifully, shall reap plentifully, and he that sows sparingly, shall gather" at the same rate; "let every man do, as himself purposeth in his heart." Only it were well in this sacrament of love, we had some correspondency, and proportionable returns of charity and religious affections.

Some religious persons have moved a question, whether it were better to communicate often or seldom? some thinking it more reverence to those holy mysteries to come but seldom; while others say, it is greater religion or charity to come frequently. But I suppose this question does not dif-

fer much from a dispute, Whether it is better to pray often, or to pray seldom? For whatsoever is commonly pretended against a frequent communion, may, in its proportion, object against a solemn prayer; remanent affection to a sin, enmity with neighbours, secular avocations to the height of care and trouble: for these either are great indecencies, in order to a holy prayer; or else, are direct irregularities, and unhallow the prayer. And the celebration of the holy sacrament is, in itself and its own formality, a sacred, solemn, and ritual prayer, in which we invoke God by the merits of Christ, expressing the abjuration, not only in words, but in actual repentment and commemoration of his passion. And if the necessities of the church were well considered, we should find that a daily sacrifice of prayer, and a daily prayer of sacrifice, were no more but what her condition requires: and I would to God the governors of churches would take care, that the necessities of kings and kingdoms, of churches and states, were represented to God by the most solemn and efficacious intercessions; and Christ hath taught us none greater than the praying in the virtue and celebration of his sacrifice. And this is the counsel, that the church received from Ignatius: "Hasten frequently to approach the eucharist, the glory of God. For when this is daily celebrated, we break the powers of Satan, who turns all his actions into hostilities and darts of fire." But this concerns the ministers of religion, who, living in communities and colleges, must make religion the business of their lives, and support kingdoms, and serve the interest of kings, by the prayer of a daily sacrifice. And yet, in this ministry, the clergy may serve their own necessary affairs, if the ministration be divided into courses, as it was, by the economy and wisdom of Solomon, for the temple.

But concerning the communion of secular and lay persons, the consideration is something different. St Austin gave this answer to it: "To receive the sacrament every day, I neither praise nor reprove; at least, let them receive it every Lord's day." And this he spake to husbandmen and merchants. At the first commencement of Christianity, while the fervors apostolical, and the calentures of infant Christendom did last, the whole assembly of faithful people communicated every day; and this lasted in Rome and Spain until the time of St Jerome: concerning which diligence he gives the same censure which I now recited from St Austin; for it suffered inconvenience by reason of a declining piety, and the intervening of secular interests. But then it came to once a week; and yet that was not every where strictly observed. But that it be received once every fortnight St Hierome counsels very strongly to Eustachium, a holy virgin: "Let the virgins confess their sins twice every month, or oftener; and being fortified with the communion of the Lord's body, let them manfully fight against the devil's forces and attempts." A while after, it came to once a month, then once a year, then it fell from that too. For it hath fared with this sacrament as with other actions of religion, which have descended from flames to still fires, from fires to sparks, from sparks to embers, from embers to smoke, from smoke to nothing. And although the public declension of piety is such, that, in this present conjuncture of things, it is impossible men should be reduced to a daily communion; yet that they are to communicate frequently is so a duty, that, as no excuse but impossibility can make the omission innocent, so the loss and consequent want is infinite and invaluable.

For the holy communion being a remembrance and sacramental repetition of Christ's passion and the application of his sacrifice to us and the whole Catholic church; as they who seldom communicate, delight not to remember the passion of our Lord, and sin against his very purpose, and one of the designs of institution; so he cares not to receive the benefits of the sacrifice, who so neglects their application, and reducing them to actual profit and reception. "Whence came the sanctimony of the primitive Christians? whence came their strict observation of the Divine commandments? whence was it, that they persevered in holy actions with hope and an unwearied diligence? from whence did their despising worldly things come, and living with common possession, and the distributions of a universal charity? Whence came these and many other excellencies, but from a constant prayer, and a daily eucharist? They who every day represented the death of Christ, every day were ready to die for Christ." This was the discourse of an ancient and excellent person. And if we consider, that this sacrament is intended to unite the spirits and affections of the world, and that it is diffusive and powerful to this purpose, ("for we are one body," saith St Paul, "because we partake of one bread;") possibly we may have reason to say, that the wars of kingdoms, the animosity of families, the infinite multitude of law-suits, the personal hatreds, and the universal want of charity, which hath made the world miserable and wicked, may, in a great degree, be attributed to the neglect of this great symbol and instrument of charity. The chalice of the sacrament is called by St Paul, "the cup of blessing;" and if children need every day to beg blessings of their parents, if we also thirst not after this cup of blessing, blessing may be far from us. It is called "the communication of the blood of Christ;" and it is not imaginable, that man should love heaven, or felicity, or his Lord, that desires not perpetually to bathe in that salutary stream, the blood of the holy Jesus, the immaculate Lamb of God.

But I find, that the religious fears of men are pretended a colour to excuse this irreligion. Men are wicked, and not prepared, and busy, and full of cares and affairs of the world, and cannot come with due preparation; and therefore better not come at all; nay, men are not ashamed to say, they are at enmity with certain persons, and therefore cannot come. Concerning those persons who are unprepared, because they are in a state of sin or uncharitableness, it is true, they must not come; but this is so far from excusing their not coming, that they increase their sin, and secure misery to themselves, because they do not "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset them," that they may come to the marriage-supper. It is as if we should excuse ourselves from the duties of charity, by saying we are uncharitable; from giving alms, by saying we are covetous; from chastity, by saying we are lascivious. To such men it is just that they graze with the goats, because they refuse to wash their hands, that they may come to the supper of the Lamb. 2. Concerning those that pretend cares and incumbrances of the world; if their affairs make sin and impure affections to stick upon them, they are in the first consideration: but if their office be necessary, just, or charitable, they imitate Martha, and choose the least perfect part, when they neglect the offices of religion for duties economical. 3. But the other sort have more pretence and fairer virtue in their outside. They suppose, like the Persian princes, the rarer and seldomer such mysterious rites are seen, the more reverence we shall have,

and they the more majesty : and they are fearful lest the frequent attraction of them should make us less to value the great earnestness of our redemption and immortality. It is a pious consideration, but not becoming them : for it cannot be, that the sacrament be undervalued by frequent reception, without the great unworthiness of the persons, so turning God's grace into lightness, and loathing manna : nay, it cannot be without an unworthy communication ; for he that receives worthily, increases in the love of God and religion, and the fires of the altar are apt to kindle our sparks into a flame ; and when Christ our Lord enters into us, and we grow weary of him, or less fond of his frequent entrance and perpetual cohabitation, it is an infallible sign we have let his enemy in, or are preparing for it. For this is the difference between secular and spiritual objects : Nothing in this world hath any pleasure in it long beyond the hope of it, for the possession and enjoyment is found so empty that we grow weary of it ; but whatsoever is spiritual, and in order to God, is less before we have it, but in the fruition it swells our desires, and enlarges the appetite, and makes us more receptive and forward in the entertainment : and therefore those acts of religion that set us forward in time, and backward in affection, do declare that we have not well done our duty, but have communicated unworthily. So that the mending of our fault will answer the objection. Communicate with more devotion, and repent with greater contrition, and walk with more caution, and pray more earnestly, and meditate diligently, and receive with reverence and godly fear ; and we shall find our affections increase together with the spiritual emolument ; ever remembering that pious and wise advice of St Ambrose, "Receive, every day, that which may profit thee every day. But he that is not disposed to receive it every day, is not fit to receive it every year."

And if after all diligence, it be still feared that a man is not well prepared, I must say that it is a scruple, that is, a trouble beyond a doubt and without reason, next to superstition and the dreams of religion ; and it is nourished, by imagining that no duty is accepted, if it be less than perfection, and that God is busied in heaven, not only to destroy the wicked and to dash in pieces vessels of dishonour, but to "break a bruised reed" in pieces, and to cast the "smoking flax" into the flames of hell. In opposition to which, we must know, that nothing makes us unprepared but an evil conscience, a state of sin, or a deadly act : but the lesser infirmities of our life, against which we daily strive, and for which we never have any kindness or affections, are not spots in these feasts of charity, but instruments of humility, and stronger invitations to those rites, which are ordained for corroboratives against infirmities of the soul, and for the growth of the spirit in the strengths of God. For those other acts of preparation, which precede and accompany the duty, the better and more religiously they are done, they are indeed of more advantage, and honorary to the sacrament ; yet he that comes in the state of grace, though he takes the opportunity upon a sudden offer, sins not : and in such indefinite duties, whose degrees are not described, it is good counsel to do our best ; but it is ill to make them instruments of scruple, as if it were essentially necessary to do that in the greatest height, which is only intended for advantage, and the fair accommodation of the mystery. But these very acts, if they be esteemed necessary preparations to the sacrament, are the greatest arguments in the world that it is best to communicate often ; because the doing of that, which

must suppose the exercise of so many graces must needs promote the interest of religion, and dispose strongly to habitual graces by our frequent and solemn repetition of the acts. It is necessary that every communicant be first examined concerning the state of his soul, by himself or his superior: and that very scrutiny is in admirable order towards the reformation of such irregularities which time and temptation, negligence and incuriousness, infirmity or malice, have brought into the secret regions of our will and understanding. Now, although this examination be therefore enjoined, that no man should approach to the holy table in the state of ruin and reprobation, and that therefore it is an act, not of direct preparation, but an inquiry whether we be prepared or no; yet this very examination will find so many little irregularities, and so many great imperfections, that it will appear the more necessary, to repair the breaches and lesser ruins by such acts of piety and religion; because every communication is intended to be a nearer approach to God, a farther step in grace, a progress towards glory, and an instrument of perfection; and therefore upon the stock of our spiritual interests, for the purchase of a greater hope, and the advantages of a growing charity, ought to be frequently received. I end with the words of a pious and learned person: "It is a vain fear and an imprudent reverence, that procrastinates and defers going to the Lord that calls them: they deny to go to the fire, pretending they are cold; and refuse physic, because they need it."

THE PRAYER.

O BLESSED and eternal Jesus, who gavest thyself a sacrifice for our sins, thy body for our spiritual food, thy blood to nourish our spirits, and to quench the flames of hell and lust, who didst so love us, who were thine enemies, that thou desiredst to reconcile us to thee, and becamest all one with us, that we may live the same life, think the same thoughts, love the same love, and be partakers of thy resurrection and immortality; open every window of my soul, that I may be full of light, and may see the excellency of thy love, the merits of thy sacrifice, the bitterness of thy passion, the glories and virtues of the mysterious sacrament. Lord, let me ever hunger and thirst after this instrument of righteousness; let me have no gust or relish of the unsatisfying delights of things below, but let my soul dwell in thee; let me for ever receive thee spiritually, and very frequently communicate with thee sacramentally, and imitate thy virtues piously and strictly, and dwell in the pleasures of thy house eternally. "Lord, thou hast prepared a table for me, against them that trouble me:" let that holy sacrament of the eucharist be to me a defence and shield, a nourishment and medicine, life and health, a means of sanctification and spiritual growth: that I, receiving the body of my dearest Lord, may be one with his mystical body, and of the same spirit, united with the indissoluble bonds of a strong faith, and a holy hope, and a never-failing charity, that from this veil I may pass into the visions of eternal clarity, from eating thy body, to beholding thy face in the glories of thy everlasting kingdom, O blessed and eternal Jesus. Amen.

ON THE EVENTS OCCURRING ON THE EVENING OF THE PASSION.

WHEN Jesus had supped and sung a hymn, and prayed, and exhorted and comforted his disciples with a farewell sermon, in which he repeated such of his former precepts, as were now apposite to the present condition, and reinforced them with proper and pertinent arguments, he went over the brook Cedron, and entered into a garden, and into the prologue of his passion; choosing that place for his agony and satisfactory pains in which the first scene of human misery was represented, and where he might best attend the offices of devotion preparatory to his death. Besides this, he therefore departed from the house, that he might give opportunity to his enemies' surprise, and yet not incommode the good man by whose hospitality they had eaten the paschal lamb; so that he went "like a lamb to the slaughter," to the garden as to a prison, as if, by an agreement with his persecutors, he had expected their arrest, and staid there to prevent their farther inquiry. For so great was his desire to pay our ransom, that himself did assist, by a forward patience and active opportunity, towards the persecution: teaching us, that, by an active zeal and a ready spirit, we assist the designs of God's glory, though in our own sufferings and secular infelicities.

When he entered the garden, he left his disciples at the entrance of it, calling with him only Peter, James, and John: "he withdrew himself from the rest about a stone's cast, and began to be exceeding heavy." He was not sad till he had called them; for his sorrow began when he pleased; which sorrow he also chose to represent to those three who had seen his transfiguration, the earnest of his future glory, that they might see of how great glory for our sakes he disrobed himself; and that they also might, by the confronting those contradictory accidents, observe, that God uses to dispense his comforts, the irradiations and emissions of his glory, to be preparatives to those sorrows, with which our life must be allayed and seasoned; that none should refuse to partake of the sufferings of Christ, if either they have already felt his comforts, or hope hereafter to wear his crown. And it is not ill observed, that St Peter, being the chief of the apostles and doctor of the circumcision, St John, being a virgin, and St James, the first of the apostles that was martyred, were admitted to Christ's greatest retirements and mysterious secrecies, as being persons of so singular and eminent dispositions, to whom, according to the pious opinion of the church, especial coronets are prepared in heaven, besides the great "crown of righteousness," which in common shall beautify the heads of all the saints; meaning this, that doctors, virgins, and martyrs, shall receive, even for their very state of life and accidental graces, more eminent degrees of accidental glory, like as the sun, reflecting upon a limpid fountain, receives its rays doubled, without any increment of its proper and natural light.

"Jesus began to be exceeding sorrowful," to be "sore amazed," and "sad even to death." And because he was now to suffer the pains of our sins, there began his passion, whence our sins spring. From an evil heart, and a prevaricating spirit, all our sins arise; and in the spirit of Christ began his sorrow, where he truly felt the full value and demerit of sin,

which we think not worthy of a tear or a hearty sigh : but he groaned, and fell under the burden. But therefore he took upon him this sadness, that our imperfect sorrow and contrition might be heightened in his example, and accepted in its union and confederacy with his. And Jesus still designed a farther mercy for us ; for he sanctified the passion of fear, and hallowed natural sadnesses, that we might not think the infelicities of our nature, and the calamities of our temporal condition, to become criminal, so long as they make us not omit a duty, or dispose us to the election of a crime, or force us to swallow a temptation, nor yet to exceed the value of their impulsive cause. He that grieves for the loss of friends, and yet had rather lose all the friends he hath than lose the love of God, hath the sorrow of our Lord for his precedent. And he that fears death, and trembles at its approximation, and yet had rather die again than sin once, hath not sinned in his fear ; Christ hath hallowed it, and the necessitous condition of his nature is his excuse. But it were highly to be wished, that, in the midst of our caresses and levities of society, in our festivities and triumphal merriments, when we laugh at folly and rejoice in sin, we would remember, that for those very merriments our blessed Lord felt a bitter sorrow ; and not one vain and sinful laugh, but cost the holy Jesus a sharp pang and throe of passion.

Now that the holy Jesus began to taste the bitter cup, he betook him to his great antidote, which himself, the great Physician of our souls, prescribed to all the world to cure their calamities, and to make them pass from miseries into virtue, that so they may arrive at glory ; he prays to his heavenly Father, he kneels down, and not only so, but “ falls flat upon the earth,” and would, in humility and fervent adoration, have descended low as the centre ; he prays with an intension great as his sorrow, and yet with a dereliction so great, and a conformity to the Divine will so ready, as if it had been the most indifferent thing in the world for him to be delivered to death, or from it : for, though his nature did decline death, as that which hath a natural horror and contradiction to the present interest of its preservation ; yet when he looked upon it, as his heavenly Father had put it into the order of redemption of the world, it was that “ baptism,” which he was “ straitened, till he had accomplished.” And now there is not in the world any condition of prayer which is essential to the duty, or any circumstances of advantage to its performance, but were concentrated in this one instance ; humility of spirit, lowliness of deportment, importunity of desire, a fervent spirit, a lawful matter, resignation to the will of God, great love, the love of a Son to his Father ; which appellation was the form of his address ; perseverance ; he went thrice, and prayed the same prayer ; it was not long, and it was so retired as to have the advantages of a sufficient solitude and opportune recollection ; for he was withdrawn from the most of his disciples : and yet not so alone as to lose the benefit of communion ; for Peter and the two Boanerges were near him. Christ, in this prayer, which was the most fervent that he ever made on earth, intending to transmit to all the world a precedent of devotion to be transcribed and imitated ; that we should cast all our cares, and empty them in the bosom of God, being content to receive such a portion of our trouble back again, which he assigns us for our spiritual emolument.

The holy Jesus having in a few words poured out torrents of innocent desires, was pleased still to interrupt his prayer, that he might visit his

charge, that "little flock," which was presently after to be "scattered:" he was careful of them in the midst of his agonies; they, in his sufferings, were fast asleep. He awakens them, gives them command to "watch and pray," that is, to be vigilant in the custody of their senses, and observant of all accidents, and to pray that they may be strengthened against all incursions of enemies and temptations; and then returns to prayer; and so a third time; his devotion still increasing with his sorrow. And when his prayer was full, and his sorrow come to a great measure, after the third, God sent his "angel to comfort him;" and, by that act of grace, then only expressed, hath taught us to continue our devotions so long as our needs last. It may be, God will not send a comforter till the third time, that is, after a long expectation, and a patient sufferance, and a lasting hope: in the interim God supports us with a secret hand, and, in his own time, will refresh the spirit with the visitations of his angels, with the emissions of comfort from the Spirit, the Comforter. And know this also, that the holy angel, and the Lord of all the angels, stands by every holy person when he prays; and although he draws before his glories the curtain of a cloud, yet in every instant he takes care we shall not perish, and in a just season dissolves the cloud, and makes it to distil in holy dew, and drops sweet as manna, pleasant as nard, and wholesome as the breath of heaven. And such was the consolation which the holy Jesus received by the ministry of the angel, representing to Christ, the Lord of the angels, how necessary it was that he should die for the glory of God; that, in his passion, his justice, wisdom, goodness, power, and mercy, should shine; that, unless he died, all the world should perish, but his blood should obtain their pardon; and that it should open the gates of heaven, repair the ruin of angels, establish a holy church, be productive of innumerable adoptive children to his Father, whom himself should make heirs of glory; and that his passion should soon pass away, his Father hearing and granting his prayer, that "the cup" should pass speedily, though indeed it should pass through him; that it should be attended and followed with a glorious resurrection, with eternal rest and glory of his humanity, with the exaltation of his name, with a supreme dominion over all the world, and that his Father should make him King of kings, and Prince of the Catholic church. These, or whatsoever other comforts the angel ministered, were such considerations which the holy Jesus knew, and the angel knew not but by communication from that God, to whose assumed humanity the angel spake; yet he was pleased to receive comfort from his servant, just as God receives glory from his creatures, and as he rejoices in his own works, even because he is good and gracious, and is pleased so to do; and because himself had caused a voluntary sadness to be interposed between the habitual knowledge and the actual consideration of these discourses; and we feel a pleasure, when a friendly hand lays upon our wound the plaster, which ourselves have made, and applies such instruments and considerations of comfort, which we have in notion and an ineffective habit, but cannot reduce them to act, because no man is so apt to be his own comforter: which God hath therefore permitted, that our needs should be the occasion of a mutual charity.

It was a great season for the angel's coming, because it was a great necessity, which was incumbent upon our Lord; for his sadness and his agony were so great, mingled and compounded of sorrow and zeal, fear and

desire, innocent nature, and perfect grace, that he "sweat drops" as great as if the blood had started through little undiscerned fontinels, and outrun the streams and rivers of his cross. Euthymius and Theophylact say, that the evangelists use this as a tragical expression of the greatest agony, and an unusual sweat, it being usual to call the tears of the greatest sorrow, "tears of blood." But, from the beginning of the church, it hath been more generally apprehended literally, and that some blood, mingled with the serous substance, issued from his veins in so great abundance, that they moistened the ground, and bedecked his garment, which stood like a new firmament studded with stars, portending an approaching storm. Now "he came from Bozrah with his garments red and bloody." And this agony verified, concerning the holy Jesus, those words of David, "I am poured out like water, my bones are dispersed, my heart, in the midst of my body, is like melting wax," saith Justin Martyr. Venerable Bede saith, that the descending of these drops of blood upon the earth, besides the general purpose, had also a particular relation to the present infirmities of the apostles, that our blessed Lord obtained of his Father, by the merits of those holy drops, mercies and special support for them; and that effusion redeemed them from the present participation of death. And St Austin meditates, that the body of our Lord, all overspread with drops of bloody sweat, did prefigure the future state of martyrs, and that his body mystical should be clad in a red garment, variegated with the symbols of labour and passion, sweat and blood: by which himself was placed to purify his church, and present her to God holy and spotless. What collateral designs and tacit significations might be designed by this mysterious sweat, I know not; certainly it was a sad beginning of a most dolorous passion; and such griefs, which have so violent, permanent, and sudden effects upon the body, which is not of a nature symbolical to interior and immaterial causes, are proclaimed by such marks to be high and violent. We have read of some persons, that the grief and fear of one night hath put a cover of snow upon their heads, as if the labours of thirty years had been extracted, and the quintessence drunk off, in the passion of that night; but if nature had been capable of a greater or more prodigious impress of passion than a bloody sweat, it must needs have happened in this agony of the holy Jesus, in which he undertook a grief great enough to make up the imperfect contrition of all the saints, and to satisfy for the penitencies of all the world.

By this time the traitor, Judas, was arrived at Gethsemane, and being in the vicinage of the garden, Jesus rises from his prayers, and first calls his disciples from their sleep, and, by an irony, seems to give them leave to "sleep on;" but reproves their drowsiness, when danger is so near, and bids them "henceforth take their rest;" meaning, if they could for danger, which now was, indeed, come to the garden doors. But the holy Jesus, that it might appear he undertook the passion with choice and a free election, not only refused to fly, but called his apostles to rise, that they might meet his murderers, who came to him "with swords and staves," as if they were to surprise a prince of armed outlaws, whom without force they could not reduce. So, also, might butchers do well to go armed, when they are pleased to be afraid of lambs, by calling them lions. Judas only discovered his master's retirements, and betrayed him to the opportunities of an armed band; for he could not accuse his master of any word or private action, that might render him obnoxious to suspicion or the law. For such are

the rewards of innocence and prudence, that the one secures against sin, the other against suspicion and appearances.

The holy Jesus had accustomed to receive every of his disciples after absence with entertainment of a kiss, which was the endearment of persons, and the expression of the oriental civility : and Judas was confident that his Lord would not reject him, whose feet he had washed at the time, when he foretold this event, and therefore had agreed to signify him by this sign ; and did so, beginning war with a kiss, and breaking the peace of his Lord by the symbol of kindness ; which, because Jesus entertained with much evenness and charitable expressions, calling him “ friend,” he gave evidence that if he retained civilities to his greatest enemies in the very acts of hostility, he hath banquets, and crowns, and sceptres for his friends, that adore him with the kisses of charity, and love him with the sincerity of an affectionate spirit. But our blessed Lord, besides his essential sweetness and serenity of spirit, understood well, how great benefits himself and all the world were to receive by occasion of that act of Judas : and our greatest enemy does, by accident, to holy persons, the offices of their dearest friends ; telling us our faults, without a cloak to cover their deformities, but, out of malice, laying open the circumstances of aggravation ; doing us affronts, from whence we have an instrument of our patience ; and restraining us from scandalous crimes, lest we “ become a scorn and reproof to them that hate us.” And it is none of God’s least mercies, that he permits enmities amongst men : that animosities and peevishness may reprove more sharply, and correct with more severity and simplicity than the gentle hand of friends, who are apter to bind our wounds up, than to discover them and make them smart ; but they are to us an excellent probation, how friends may best do the offices of friends, if they would take the plainness of enemies in accusing, and still mingle it with the tenderness and good affections of friends. But our blessed Lord called Judas “ friend,” as being the instrument of bringing him to glory, and all the world to pardon, if they would.

Jesus himself begins the inquiry, and leads them into their errand, and tells them he was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought. But this also, which was an answer so gentle, had in it a strength greater than the eastern wind or the voice of thunder ; for God was in that “ still voice,” and it struck them down to the ground. And yet they, and so do we, still persist to persecute our Lord, and to provoke the eternal God, who can, with the breath of his mouth, with a word, or a sign, or a thought, reduce us into nothing, or into a worse condition, even an eternal duration of torments, and cohabitation with a never-ending misery. And if we cannot bear a soft answer of the merciful God, how shall we dare to provoke the wrath of the Almighty Judge ? But in this instance there was a rare mixture of effects, as there was in Christ of natures ; the voice of a man and the power of God. For it is observed by the doctors of the primitive ages, that, from the nativity of our Lord to the day of his death, the divinity and humanity did so communicate in effects, that no great action passed, but it was like the sun shining through a cloud, or a beauty with a thin veil drawn over it ; they gave illustration and testimony to each other. The holy Jesus was born a tender and a crying infant ; but is adored by the magi as a king, by the angels as their God. He is circumcised as a man ; but a name is given him, to signify him to be the Saviour of the world. He flies into Egypt, like a distressed child, under the conduct of

his helpless parents ; but as soon as he enters the country, the idols fall down, and confess his true divinity. He is presented in the temple as the son of man ; but by Simeon and Anna he is celebrated, with divine praises, for the Messias, the Son of God. He is baptized in Jordan as a sinner ; but the Holy Ghost, descending upon him, proclaimed him to be the well-beloved of God. He is hungry in the desert as a man ; but sustained his body without meat and drink, for forty days together, by the power of his divinity : there he is tempted of Satan as a weak man, and the angels of light minister unto him as their supreme Lord. And now, a little before his death, when he was to take upon him all the affronts, miseries, and exinanitions of the most miserable, he receives testimonies from above, which are most wonderful ; for he was transfigured upon Mount Tabor, entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, had the acclamations of the people ; when he was dying, he darkened the sun ; when he was dead, he opened the sepulchres ; when he was fast nailed to the cross, he made the earth to tremble ; now, when he suffers himself to be apprehended by a guard of soldiers, he strikes them all to the ground only by replying to their answer : that the words of the prophet might be verified, “ Therefore my people shall know my name ; therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak ; behold ! it is I.”*

The soldiers and servants of the Jews having recovered from their fall, and risen by the permission of Jesus, still persisted in their inquiry after him, who was present, ready, and desirous to be sacrificed. He, therefore, permitted himself to be taken, but not his disciples : for he it was that set them their bounds ; and he secured his apostles to be witnesses of his suffering and his glories ; and this work was the redemption of the world, in which no man could have an active share ; he alone was to tread the wine-press ; and time enough they should be called to a fellowship of sufferings. But Jesus went to them, and they bound him with cords ; and so began our liberty and redemption from slavery, and sin, and cursings, and death. But he was bound faster by bands of his own : his Father’s will, and mercy, pity of the world, prophecies and mysteries, and love held him fast : and these cords were as “ strong as death ;” and the cords, which the soldiers’ malice put upon his holy hands, were but symbols and figures, his own compassion and affection were the morals. But yet he undertook this short restraint and condition of a prisoner, that all sorts of persecution and exterior calamities might be hallowed by his susception ; and these pungent sorrows should, like bees, sting him, and leave their sting behind, that all the sweetnesses should remain for us. Some melancholic devotions have, from uncertain stories, added sad circumstances of the first violence done to our Lord ; that they bound him with three cords, and that with so much violence, that they caused blood to start from his tender hands ; that they spat then, also, upon him, with a violence and incivility like that, which their fathers had used towards Hur, the brother of Aaron, whom they choked with impure spittings into his throat, because he refused to consent to the making a golden calf. These particulars are not transmitted by certain records. Certain it is, they wanted no malice, and now no power ; for the Lord had given himself into their hands.

St Peter, seeing his master thus ill-used, asked, “ Master, shall we strike

* Isa. lii .G.

with the sword ?” and before he had his answer, cut off the ear of Malchus. Two swords there were in Christ’s family, and St Peter bore one ; either because he was to kill the paschal lamb, or, according to the custom of the country, to secure them against beasts of prey, which in that region were frequent, and dangerous in the night. But now he used it in an unlawful war ; he had no competent authority ; it was against the ministers of his lawful prince, and against our prince we must not draw a sword for Christ himself, himself having forbidden us ; as his “ kingdom is not of this world,” so neither were his defences secular : he could have called for many legions of angels for his guard, if he had so pleased ; and we read that one angel slew 185,000 armed men in one night ; and, therefore it was a vast power, which was at the command of our Lord : and he needs not such low auxiliaries as an army of rebels, or a navy of pirates, to defend his cause : he first lays the foundation of our happiness in his sufferings, and hath ever since supported religion by patience and suffering, and in poverty, and all the circumstances and conjunctures of improbable causes. Fighting for religion is certain to destroy charity, but not certain to support faith. St Peter, therefore, may use his keys, but he is commanded to put up his sword ; and he did so ; and presently he and his fellows fairly ran away : and yet that course was much the more Christian ; for though it had in it much infirmity, yet it had no malice. In the mean time, the Lord was pleased to touch the ear of Malchus, and he cured it : adding to the first instance of power, in throwing them to the ground, an act of miraculous mercy, curing the wounds of an enemy made by a friend. But neither did this pierce their callous and obdurate spirits ; but they led him in uncouth ways, and through the brook Cedron, in which it is said the ruder soldiers plunged him, and passed upon him all the affronts and rudenesses which an insolent and cruel multitude could think of, to signify their contempt and their rage. And such is the nature of evil men, who, when they are not softened by the instruments and arguments of grace, are much hardened by them ; such being the purpose of God, that either grace shall cure sin, or accidentally increase it ; that it shall either pardon it, or bring it to greater punishment ; for so I have seen healthful medicines, abused by the incapacities of a healthless body, become fuel to a fever, and increase the distemperature, from indisposition to a sharp disease, and from thence to the margin of the grave. But it was otherwise in Saul, whom Jesus threw to the ground with a more angry sound than these persecutors : but Saul rose a saint, and they persisted devils ; and the grace of God distinguished the events.

ON THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS.

WHEN the sentence of death pronounced against the Lord was to be put in execution, the soldiers pulled off the robe of mockery, the scarlet mantle, which in jest they put upon him, and put on his own garments. But, as Origen observes, the evangelist mentioned not that they took off the crown of thorns ; what might serve their interest they pursue, but nothing of re-

mission or mercy to the afflicted Son of man : but so it became the King of sufferings, not to lay aside his imperial thorns, till they were changed into diadems of glory. But now Abel is led forth by his brother to be slain : a gay spectacle to satisfy impious eyes, who would not stay behind, but attended and waited upon the hangman to see the catastrophe of this bloody tragedy. But when Piety looks on, she beholds a glorious mystery. Sin laughed to see the King of heaven and earth, and the great lover of souls, instead of the sceptre of his kingdom, to bear a tree of cursing and shame. But Piety wept tears of pity, and knew they would melt into joy, when she should behold that cross, which loaded the shoulders of her Lord, afterward sit upon the sceptres, and be engraved and signed upon the foreheads of kings.

It cannot be thought but the ministers of Jewish malice used all the circumstances of affliction, which, in any case, were accustomed towards malefactors and persons to be crucified ; and therefore it was that in some old figures we see our blessed Lord described with a table appendent to the fringe of his garment, set full of nails and pointed iron ; for so sometimes they afflicted persons condemned to that kind of death : and St Cyprian affirms, that Christ did stick to the wood that he carried, being galled with the iron at his heels, and nailed even before his crucifixion. But this, and the other accidents of his journey, and their malice, so crushed his wounded, tender, and virginal body, that they were forced to lay the load upon a Cyrenian, fearing that he should die with less shame and smart than they intended him. But so he was pleased to take man unto his aid, not only to represent his own need, and the dolorousness of his passion, but to consign the duty unto man, that we must enter into a fellowship of Christ's sufferings, taking up the cross of martyrdom when God requires us, enduring affronts, being patient under affliction, loving them that hate us, and being benefactors to our enemies, abstaining from sensual and intemperate delight, forbidding to ourselves lawful festivities and recreations of our weariness, when we have an end of the spirit to serve upon the ruins of the body's strength, mortifying our desires, breaking our own will, not seeking ourselves, being entirely resigned to God. These are the cross, and the nails, and the spear, and the whip, and all the instruments of a Christian's passion. And we may consider, that every man in this world shall, in some sense or other, bear a cross : few men escape it, and it is not well with them that do : but they only bear it well that follow Christ, and tread in his steps, and bear it for his sake, and walk as he walked ; and he that follows his own desires, when he meets with a cross there, (as it is certain enough he will,) bears the cross of his concupiscence, and that hath no fellowship with the cross of Christ. By the precept of "bearing the cross," we are not tied to pull evil upon ourselves, that we may imitate our Lord in nothing but in being afflicted ; or to personate the punitive exercises of mortification and severe abstinencies, which were eminent in some saints, and to which they had special assistances, as others had the gift of chastity, and for which they had special reason, and, as they apprehended, some great necessities : but it is required that "we bear our own cross ;" so said our dearest Lord.* For when the cross of Christ is laid upon us, and we are called to martyrdom, then it is our own, because God made it to be our portion : and

* Matt. xvi. 24.

when, by the necessities of our spirit and the rebellion of our body, we need exterior mortifications and acts of self-denial, then also it is our own cross, because our needs have made it so ; and so it is when God sends us sickness, or any other calamity : whatever is either an effect of our ghostly needs, or the condition of our temporal estate, it calls for our sufferance, and patience, and equanimity ; for “ therefore Christ hath suffered for us,” saith St Peter, * “ leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps,” who bore his cross as long as he could ; and when he could no longer, he murmured not, but sank under it ; and then he was content to receive such aid, not which he chose himself, but such as was assigned him.

Jesus was led out of the gates of Jerusalem, † that he might become the sacrifice for persons without the pale, even for all the world : and the daughters of Jerusalem followed him with pious tears till they came to Calvary, a place difficult in the ascent, eminent and apt for the publication of shame, a hill of death and dead bones, polluted and impure, and there beheld him stripped naked, who clothes the field with flowers, and all the world with robes, and the whole globe with the canopy of heaven, and so dressed, that now every circumstance was a triumph : by his disgrace he trampled upon our pride ; by his poverty and nakedness, he triumphed over our covetousness and love of riches ; and, by his pains, chastised the delicacies of our flesh, and broke in pieces the fetters of our concupiscence. For as soon as Adam was clothed, he quitted Paradise ; and Jesus was made naked, that he might bring us in again. And we also must be despoiled of all our exterior adherencies, that we may pass through the regions of duty and divine love to a society of blessed spirits, and a clarified, immortal, and beatified estate.

There they nailed Jesus with four nails, fixed his cross in the ground, which, with its fall into the place of its station, gave infinite torture, by so violent a concussion of the body of our Lord, which rested upon nothing but four great wounds ; where he was designed to suffer a long and lingering torment. For crucifixion, as it was an exquisite pain, sharp and passionate, so it was not of quick effect towards taking away the life. St Andrew was two whole days upon the cross ; and some martyrs have upon the cross been rather starved and devoured with birds, than killed with the proper torment of the tree. But Jesus took all his passion with a voluntary suspension, God heightening it to great degrees of torment supernaturally ; and he laid down his life voluntarily, when his Father’s wrath was totally appeased towards mankind.

And now behold the Priest and the Sacrifice of all the world laid upon the altar of the cross, bleeding, and tortured, and dying, to reconcile his Father to us : and he was arrayed with ornaments more glorious than the robes of Aaron. The crown of thorns was his mitre, the cross his pastoral staff, the nails piercing his hands were instead of rings, the ancient ornament of priests, and his flesh razed and checkered with blue and blood instead of the parti-coloured robe. But as this object calls for our devotion, our love and eucharist to our dearest Lord ; so it must needs irreconcile us to sin, which, in the eye of all the world, brought so great shame, and pain, and amazement upon the Son of God, when he only became engaged by a charitable substitution of himself in our place ; and therefore we are assured

* 1 Pet. ii. 21.

† Heb. xiii. 13.

by the demonstration of sense and experience, it will bring death, and all imaginable miseries, as the just expresses of God's indignation and hatred: for to this we may apply the words of our Lord in the prediction of miseries to Jerusalem, "If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry!" For it is certain, Christ infinitely pleased his Father, even by becoming the person made guilty in estimate of law; and yet so great charity of our Lord, and the so great love and pleasure of his Father, exempted him not from suffering pains intolerable: and much less shall those escape, who provoke and displease God, and "despise so great salvation," which the holy Jesus hath wrought with the expense of blood and so precious a life.

But here we see a great representation and testimony of the Divine justice, who was so angry with sin, who had so severely threatened it, who does so essentially hate it, that he would not spare his only Son, when he became a conjunct person, relative to the guilt, by undertaking the charges of our nature. For although God hath set down in holy Scripture* the order of his justice, and the manner of its manifestation, that one soul shall not perish for the sins of another; yet this is meant for justice and for mercy too, that is, he will not curse the son for the father's fault, or, in any relation whatsoever, substitute one person for another to make him involuntarily guilty: but when this shall be desired by a person that cannot finally perish, and does a mercy to the exempt persons, and is a voluntary act of the suscipient, and shall in the event also redound to an infinite good, it is no deflection from the Divine justice to excuse many by the affliction of one, who also for that very suffering shall have infinite compensation. We see that, for the sin of Cham, all his posterity were accursed; the subjects of David died with the plague, because their prince numbered the people: idolatry is punished in the children of the fourth generation: Saul's seven sons were hanged for breaking the league of Gibeon; and Ahab's sin was punished in his posterity, he escaping, and "the evil was brought upon his house in his son's days." In all these cases the evil descended upon persons in near relation to the sinner, and was a punishment to him and a misery to these, and were either chastisements also of their own sins, or, if they were not, they served other ends of Providence, and led the afflicted innocent to a condition of recompense accidentally procured by that infliction. But if for such relation's sake and economical and political conjunction, as between prince and people, the evil may be transmitted from one to another, much rather is it just, when, by contract, a competent and conjunct person undertakes to quit his relative. Thus when the hand steals, the back is whipped; and an evil eye is punished with a hungry belly. Treason causes the whole family to be miserable; and a sacrilegious grandfather hath sent a locust to devour the increase of the nephews.

But, in our case, it is a voluntary contract, and therefore no injustice; all parties are voluntary. God is the supreme Lord, and his actions are the measure of justice: we, who had deserved the punishment, had great reason to desire a Redeemer: and yet Christ, who was to pay the ransom, was more desirous of it than we were, for we asked it not before it was promised and undertaken. But thus we see that sureties pay the obligation of the principal debtor, and the pledges of contracts have been, by the very wisest nations, slain, when the articles have been broken. And that

* Deut. xxiv. 16. Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

it may appear Christ was a person in all senses competent to do this for us, himself testifies, that he had "power over his own life, to take it up or lay it down." And, therefore, as there can be nothing against the most exact justice and reason of laws and punishments; so it magnifies the Divine mercy, who removes the punishment from us, who, of necessity, must have sunk under it, and yet makes us to adore his severity, who would not forgive us without punishing his son for us; to consign unto us his perfect hatred against sin, to conserve the sacredness of his laws, and to imprint upon us great characters of fear and love. The famous Locrian, Zaleucus, made a law, that all adulterers should lose both their eyes: his son was first unhappily surprised in the crime; and his father, to keep a temper between the piety and soft spirit of a parent, and the justice and severity of a judge, put out one of his own eyes, and one of his son's. So God did with us; he made some abatement, that is, as to the person with whom he was angry, but inflicted his anger upon our Redeemer, whom he essentially loved, to secure the dignity of his sanctions, and the sacredness of obedience; so marrying justice and mercy by the intervening of a commutation. Thus David escaped by the death of his son, God choosing that penalty for the expiation: and Cimon offered himself to prison, to purchase the liberty of his father Miltiades. It was a filial duty in Cimon, and yet the law was satisfied. And both these concurred in our great Redeemer. For God, who was the sole arbitrator, so disposed it, and the eternal Son of God submitted to this way of expiating our crimes, and became an argument of faith and belief of the great article of "remission of sins," and other its appendant causes and effects and adjuncts; it being wrought by a visible and notorious passion. It was made an encouragement of hope; for "he that spared not his own Son" to reconcile us, "will with him give all things else" to us so reconciled; and a great endearment of our duty and love, as it was a demonstration of his. And, in all the changes and traverses of our life, he is made to us a great example of all excellent actions, and all patient sufferings.

In the midst of two thieves, three long hours the holy Jesus hung, clothed with pain, agony, and dishonour, all of them so eminent and vast, that he who could not but hope, whose soul was enshaded with divinity, and dwelt in the bosom of God, and in the cabinet of the mysterious Trinity, yet had a cloud of misery so thick and black drawn before him, that he complained as if God had forsaken him: but this was "the pillar of cloud" which conducted Israel into Canaan. And as God behind the cloud supported the holy Jesus, and stood ready to receive him into the union of his glories; so his soul, in that great desertion, had internal comforts proceeding from consideration of all those excellent persons, which should be adopted into the fellowship of his sufferings, which should imitate his graces, which should communicate his glories. And we follow this cloud to our country, having Christ for our guide: and though he trode the way, leaning upon the cross, which, like the staff of Egypt, pierced his hands; yet it is to us a comfort and support, pleasant to our spirits as the sweetest canes, strong as the pillars of the earth, and made apt for our use, by having been borne and made smooth by the hands of our elder brother.

In the midst of all his torments, Jesus only made one prayer of sorrow, to represent his sad condition to his Father; but no accent of murmur, no syllable of anger against his enemies: instead of that, he sent up a holy, charitable, and effective prayer for their forgiveness, and by that prayer ob-

tained of God, that within fifty-five days eight thousand of his enemies were converted. So potent is the prayer of charity, that it prevails above the malice of men, turning the arts of Satan into the designs of God ; and when malice occasions the prayer, the prayer becomes an antidote to malice. And, by this instance, our blessed Lord consigned that duty to us, which, in his sermons, he had preached, That we should forgive our enemies, and pray for them : and, by so doing, ourselves are freed from the stings of anger, and the storms of a revengeful spirit ; and we oftentimes procure servants to God, friends to ourselves, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

Of the two thieves that were crucified together with our Lord, the one blasphemed ; the other had, at that time, the greatest piety in the world, except that of the blessed Virgin, and particularly had such a faith, that all the ages of the church could never show the like. For when he saw Christ “ in the same condemnation ” with himself, crucified by the Romans, accused and scorned by the Jews, forsaken by his own apostles ; a dying distressed man, doing at that time no miracles to attest his divinity or innocence ; yet then he confesses him to be a Lord, and a King, and his Saviour : he confessed his own shame and unworthiness : he submitted to the death of the cross : and, by his voluntary acceptation and tacit volition of it, made it equivalent to as great a punishment of his own suspension ; he showed an incomparable modesty, begging but for a remembrance only ; he knew himself so sinful, he durst ask no more ; he reproved the other thief for blasphemy ; he confessed the world to come, and owned Christ publicly ; he prayed to him, he hoped in him, and pitied him : showing an excellent patience, in this sad condition. And in this I consider, that besides the excellency of some of these acts, and the goodness of all, the like occasion for so exemplary faith never can occur ; and until all these things shall, in these circumstances, meet in any one man, he must not hope for so safe an exit, after an evil life, upon the confidence of this example. But now Christ had the key of Paradise in his hand ; and God blessed the good thief with this opportunity of letting him in, who, at another time, might have waited longer, and been tied to harder conditions. And, indeed, it is very probable, that he was much advantaged by the intervening accident of dying at the same time with Christ ; there being a natural compassion produced in us towards the partners of our miseries. For Christ was not void of human passions, though he had in them no imperfection or irregularity ; and, therefore, might be invited by the society of misery, the rather to admit him to participate his joys ; and St Paul proves him to be a “ merciful high priest,” because “ he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; ” the first expression of which was to this blessed thief ; Christ and he together sat at the supper of bitter herbs, and Christ paid his symbol, promising that he should “ that day be together with him in Paradise.”

By the cross of Christ stood the holy Virgin-mother, upon whom old Simeon’s prophecy was now verified : for now she felt “ a sword passing through her very soul : ” she stood without clamour and womanish noises ; sad, silent, and with a modest grief, deep as the waters of the abyss, but smooth as the face of a pool ; full of love, and patience, and sorrow, and hope. Now she was put to it to make use of all those excellent discourses her holy Son had used to build up her spirit with, and fortify it against this day. Now she felt the blessings and strengths of faith ; and she passed from

the griefs of the passion, to the expectation of the resurrection ; and she rested in this death, as in a sad remedy ; for she knew it reconciled God with all the world. But her hope drew a veil before her sorrow ; and though her grief was great enough to swallow her up, yet her love was greater and did swallow up her grief. But the sun also had a veil upon his face, and taught us to draw a curtain before the passion, which would be the most artificial expression of its greatness ; whilst by silence and wonder we confess it great beyond our expression, or, which is all one, great as the burden and baseness of our sins. And with this veil drawn before the face of Jesus, let us suppose him at the gates of Paradise, calling with his last words, in a loud voice, to have them opened, that “the King of glory might come in.”

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

THAT God is present in all places, that he sees every action, hears all discourses, and understands every thought, is no strange thing to a Christian ear, who hath been taught this doctrine, not only by right reason, and the consent of all the wise men in the world, but also by God himself in holy Scripture. “Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?”* “Neither is there any creature, that is not manifest in his sight : but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.”† “For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”‡ God is wholly in every place ; included in no place ; not bound with cords, except those of love ; not divided into parts, not changeable into several shapes ; filling heaven and earth with his present power, and with his never absent nature. So St Augustine expresses this article. So that we may imagine God to be as the air and the sea ; and we all enclosed in his circle, wrapped up in the lap of his infinite nature ; or as infants in the wombs of their pregnant mothers : and we can no more be removed from the presence of God, than from our own being.

SEVERAL MANNERS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

The presence of God is understood by us, in several manners, and to several purposes.

1. God is present by his essence : which, because it is infinite, cannot be contained within the limits of any place ; and because he is of an essential purity and spiritual nature, he cannot be undervalued by being supposed present in the places of unnatural uncleanness : because as the sun, reflecting upon the mud of strands and shores, is unpolluted in its beams, so is God not dishonoured, when we suppose him in every of his creatures, and in every part of every one of them ; and is still as unmixed with any unhandsome adherence, as is the soul in the bowels of the body.

* Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

† Heb. iv. 13.

‡ Acts vii. 28.

2. God is every where present by his power. He rolls the orbs of heaven with his hand ; he fixes the earth with his foot ; he guides all the creatures with his eye, and refreshes them with his influence : he makes the powers of hell to shake with his terrors, and binds the devils with his word, and throws them out with his command ; and sends the angels on embassies with his decrees ; he hardens the joints of infants, and confirms the bones, when they are fashioned beneath secretly in the earth. He it is, that assists at the numerous productions of fishes : and there is not one hollowness in the bottom of the sea, but he shows himself to be Lord of it, by sustaining there the creatures, that come to dwell in it : and in the wilderness, the bittern and the stork, the dragon and the satyr, the unicorn and the elk, live upon his provisions, and revere his power, and feel the force of his almightiness.

3. God is more specially present, in some places, by the several and more special manifestations of himself to extraordinary purposes. First, by glory. Thus his seat is in heaven ; because, there he sits encircled with all the outward demonstrations of his glory, which he is pleased to show to all the inhabitants of those his inward and secret courts. And thus they, that “die in the Lord,” may be properly said to be “gone to God ;” with whom although they were before, yet now they enter into his courts, into the secret of his tabernacle, into the retinue and splendour of his glory. That is called walking with God ; but this is dwelling, or being, with him. “I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ ;” so said St Paul. But this manner of Divine presence is reserved for the elect people of God, and for their portion in their country.

4. God is, by grace and benediction, specially present in holy places,* and in the solemn assemblies of his servants. If holy people meet in grots and dens of the earth, when persecution or a public necessity disturbs the public order, circumstance and convenience, God fails not to come thither to them : but God is also, by the same or a greater reason, present there, where they meet ordinarily, by order, and public authority : there God is present ordinarily, that is, at every such meeting. God will go out of his way to meet his saints, when themselves are forced out of their way of order by a sad necessity : but else, God’s usual way is to be present in those places where his servants are appointed ordinarily† to meet. But his presence there signifies nothing, but a readiness to hear their prayers, to bless their persons, to accept their offices, and to like even the circumstance of orderly and public meeting. For thither the prayers of consecration, the public authority separating it, and God’s love of order, and the reasonable customs of religion, have, in ordinary, and in a certain degree, fixed this manner of his presence ; and he loves to have it so.

5. God is especially present, in the hearts of his people, by his Holy Spirit : and indeed the hearts of holy men are temples in the truth of things, and, in type and shadow, they are heaven itself. For God reigns in the hearts of his servants : there is his kingdom. The power of grace hath subdued all his enemies : there is his power. They serve him night and day, and give him thanks and praise : that is his glory. This is the religion and worship of God in the temple. The temple itself is the heart of man ; Christ is the high-priest, who from thence sends up the incense of

* Mat. xviii. 20. Heb. x. 25.

† 1 Kings v. 9. Psalm cxxxviii. 1, 2.

prayers, and joins them to his own intercession, and presents all together to his Father; and the Holy Ghost, by his dwelling there, hath also consecrated it into a temple;* and God dwells in our hearts by faith, and Christ by his Spirit, and the Spirit by his purities: so that we are also cabinets of the mysterious Trinity; and what is this short of heaven itself, but as infancy is short of manhood, and letters of words? The same state of life it is, but not the same age. It is heaven in a looking-glass, dark, but yet true, representing the beauties of the soul, and the graces of God, and the images of his eternal glory, by the reality of a special presence.

6. God is specially present in the consciences of all persons, good and bad, by way of testimony and judgment: that is, he is there a remembrancer to call our actions to mind, a witness to bring them to judgment, and a judge to acquit or to condemn. And although this manner of presence is, in this life, after the manner of this life, that is, imperfect, and we forget many actions of our lives; yet the greatest changes of our state of grace or sin, our most considerable actions, are always present, like capital letters to an aged and dim eye: and, at the day of judgment, God shall draw aside the cloud, and manifest this manner of his presence more notoriously, and make it appear, that he was an observer of our very thoughts; and that he only laid those things by, which, because we covered with dust and negligence, were not then discerned. But when we are risen from our dust and imperfection, they all appear plain and legible.

Now the consideration of this great truth is of a very universal use, in the whole course of the life of a Christian. All the consequents and effects of it are universal. He that remembers, that God stands a witness and a judge, beholding every secrecy, besides his impiety, must have put on impudence, if he be not much restrained in his temptation to sin. "For the greatest part of sin is taken away, if a man have a witness of his conversation: and he is a great despiser of God, who sends a boy away, when he is going to commit fornication, and yet will dare to do it, though he knows God is present, and cannot be sent off: as if the eye of a little boy were more awful, than the all-seeing eye of God. He is to be feared in public, he is to be feared in private: if you go forth, he spies you, if you go in, he sees you: when you light the candle, he observes you; when you put it out, then also God marks you. Be sure, that while you are in his sight you behave yourself, as becomes so holy a presence." But if you will sin, retire yourself wisely, and go where God cannot see: for no where else can you be safe. And certainly, if men would always actually consider, and really esteem this truth, that God is the great eye of the world, always watching over our actions, and an ever-open ear to hear all our words, and an unwearied arm ever lifted up to crush a sinner into ruin, it would be the readiest way in the world, to make sin to cease from amongst the children of men, and for men to approach to the blessed estate of the saints in heaven, who cannot sin, for they always walk in the presence, and behold the face of God. This instrument is to be reduced to practice, according to the following rules:—

* 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

RULES OF EXERCISING THIS CONSIDERATION.

1. Let this actual thought often return, that God is omnipresent, filling every place ; and say with David, * “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, thou art there,” &c. This thought, by being frequent, will make an habitual dread and reverence towards God, and fear in all thy actions. For it is a great necessity and engagement to do unblamably, when we act before the Judge, who is infallible in his sentence, all-knowing in his information, severe in his anger, powerful in his providence, and intolerable in his wrath and indignation.

2. In the beginning of actions of religion, make an act of adoration, that is, solemnly worship God, and place thyself in God’s presence, and behold him with the eye of faith ; and let thy desires actually fix on him, as the object of thy worship, and the reason of thy hope, and the fountain of thy blessing. For when thou hast placed thyself before him, and kneelest in his presence, it is most likely, all the following parts of thy devotion will be answerable to the wisdom of such an apprehension, and the glory of such a presence.

3. Let every thing you see, represent to your spirit the presence, the excellency, and the power of God ; and let your conversation with the creatures lead you unto the Creator ; for so shall your actions be done, more frequently, with an actual eye to God’s presence, by your often seeing him in the glass of the creation. In the face of the sun, you may see God’s beauty ; in the fire, you may feel his heat warming ; in the water, his gentleness to refresh you : he it is, that comforts your spirit, when you have taken cordials : it is the dew of heaven, that makes your field give you bread ; and the breasts of God are the bottles, that minister drink to your necessities. This philosophy, which is obvious to every man’s experience, is a good advantage to our piety ; and, by this act of understanding, our wills are checked from violence and misdemeanour.

4. In your retirement, make frequent colloquies, or short discoursings, between God and thy own soul. “ Seven times a day do I praise thee : and, in the night season also, I thought upon thee, while I was waking.” So did David ; and every act of complaint or thanksgiving, every act of rejoicing or of mourning, every petition and every return of the heart in these intercourses, is a going to God, an appearing in his presence, and a representing him present to thy spirit and to thy necessity. And this was, long since, by a spiritual person called, “ a building to God a chapel in our heart.” It reconciles Martha’s employment with Mary’s devotion, charity and religion, the necessities of our calling and the employments of devotion. For thus, in the midst of the works of your trade, you may retire into your chapel, your heart ; and converse with God by frequent addresses and returns.

5. Represent and offer to God “ acts of love and fear ;” which are the proper effects of this apprehension, and the proper exercise of this consideration. For, as God is every where present by his power, he calls for reverence and godly fear : as he is present to thee in all thy needs, and

relieves them, he deserves thy love : and since, in every accident of our lives, we find one or other of these apparent, and, in most things, we see both, it is a proper and proportionate return, that to every such demonstration of God, we express ourselves sensible of it, by admiring the Divine goodness, or trembling at his presence ; ever obeying him, because we love him, and ever obeying him, because we fear to offend him. This is that which which Enoch did, who thus “ walked with God.”

6 Let us remember, that God is in us, and that we are in him : we are his workmanship, let us not deface it ; we are in his presence, let us not pollute it by unholy and impure actions. God hath “ also wrought all our works in us ;” * and because he rejoices in his own works, if we defile them, and make them unpleasant to him, we walk perversely with God, and he will walk crookedly towards us.

7. “ God is in the bowels of thy brother ;” refresh them, when he needs it, and then you give your alms in the presence of God, and to God ; and he feels the relief which thou providest for thy brother.

8. God is in every place : suppose it therefore to be a church : and that decency of deportment and piety of carriage, which you are taught by religion, or by custom, or by civility and public manners, to use in churches, the same use in all places : with this difference only, that, in churches, let your deportment be religious in external forms and circumstances also ; but there and every where, let it be religious in abstaining from spiritual indecencies, and in readiness to do good actions : that it may not be said of us, as God once complained of his people, “ Why hath my beloved done wickedness in my house ” ? †

9. God is in every creature : be cruel towards none, neither abuse any by intemperance. Remember, that the creatures, and every member of thy own body, is one of the lesser cabinets and receptacles of God. They are such, which God hath blessed with his presence, hallowed by his touch, and separated from unholy use, by making them to belong to his dwelling.

10. He walks as in the presence of God, that converses with him in frequent prayer, and frequent communion ; that runs to him in all his necessities, that asks counsel of him in all his doubtings ; that opens all his wants to him ; that weeps before him for his sins ; that asks remedy and support for his weakness ; that fears him as a judge ; reverences him as a lord ; obeys him as a father ; and loves him as a patron.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS EXERCISE.

The benefits of this consideration and exercise being universal upon all the parts of piety, I shall less need to specify any particulars ; but yet, most properly, this exercise of considering the Divine presence is, 1. an excellent help to prayer, producing in us reverence and awfulness to the Divine Majesty of God, and actual devotion in our offices. 2. It produces confidence in God, and fearlessness of our enemies, patience in trouble, and hope of remedy ; since God is so nigh in all our sad accidents, he is a disposer of the hearts of men and the events of things ; he proportions out our trials, and supplies us with remedy, and, where his rod strikes us, his staff supports us. To which we may add this ; that God, who is always

* Isa. xxvi. 12.

† Jer. xi. 15.

with us, is especially, by promise, with us in tribulation, to turn the misery into a mercy, and that our greatest trouble may become our advantage, by entitling us to a new manner of the Divine presence. 3. It is apt to produce joy and rejoicing in God, we being more apt to delight in the partners and witnesses of our conversation ; every degree of mutual abiding and conversing being a relation and an endearment : we are of the same household with God ; he is with us in our natural actions, to preserve us ; in our recreations, to restrain us ; in our public actions to applaud or reprove us ; in our private, to observe us : in our sleeps, to watch by us ; in our watchings, to refresh us : and if we walk with God in all his ways, as he walks with us in all ours, we shall find perpetual reasons to enable us to keep that rule of God, “ Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.” And this puts me in mind of a saying of an old religious person, “ There is one way of overcoming our ghostly enemies ; spiritual mirth, and a perpetual bearing of God in our minds.” This effectively resists the devil, and suffers us to receive no heart from him. 4. This exercise is apt also to enkindle holy desires of the enjoyment of God, because it produces joy, when we do enjoy him ; the same desires that a weak man hath for a defender ; the sick man for a physician ; the poor, for a patron ; the child, for his father ; the espoused lover, for her betrothed. 5. From the same fountain are apt to issue humility of spirit, apprehensions of our great distance and our great needs, our daily wants and hourly supplies, admiration of God’s unspeakable mercies : it is the cause of great modesty and decency in our actions ; it helps to recollection of mind, and restrains the scatterings and looseness of wandering thoughts ; it establishes the heart in good purposes, and leadeth on to perseverance ; it gains purity and perfection (according to the saying of God to Abraham, “ walk before me, and be perfect,”) holy fear, and holy love, and indeed every thing that pertains to holy living : when we see ourselves placed in the eye of God, who sets us on work and will reward us plenteously, to serve him with an eye-service is very pleasing ; for he also sees the heart : and the want of this consideration was declared to be the cause why Israel sinned so grievously, “ for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not ;” * “ therefore the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness.” † What a child would do, in the eye of his father ; and a pupil, before his tutor ; and a wife, in the presence of her husband ; and a servant, in the sight of his master ; let us always do the same : for we are made a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men ; we are always in the sight and presence of the all-seeing and almighty God, who also is to us a father and guardian, a husband and lord.

OF CONTENTEDNESS IN ALL ESTATES AND ACCIDENTS.

VIRTUES and discourses are, like friends, necessary in all fortunes ; but those are the best, which are friends in our sadnesses, and support us in sorrows and sad accidents ; and in this sense, no man that is virtuous can be friendless ; nor hath any man reason to complain of the Divine Provi-

* Psal. x. 11.

† Ezek. ix. 9.

dence, or accuse the public disorder of things, or his own felicity, since God hath appointed one remedy for all the evils in the world, and that is a contented spirit : for this alone makes a man pass through fire, and not be scorched ; through seas, and not be drowned ; through hunger and nakedness, and want nothing. For since all the evil in the world consists in the disagreeing between the object and the appetite, as when a man hath what he desires not, or desires what he hath not, or desires amiss ; he that composes his spirit to the present accident, hath variety of instances for his virtue, but none to trouble him ; because his desires enlarge not beyond his present fortune ; and a wise man is placed in the variety of chances, like the nave or centre of a wheel, in the midst of all the circumvolutions and changes of posture, without violence or change, save that it turns gently in compliance with its changed parts, and is indifferent which part is up, and which is down ; for there is some virtue or other to be exercised, whatever happens, either patience or thanksgiving, love or fear, moderation or humility, charity or contentedness, and they are every one of them equally in order to his great end and immortal felicity : and beauty is not made by white or red, by black eyes and a round face, by a straight body and a smooth skin, but by a proportion to the fancy. No rules can make amiability ; our minds and apprehensions make that ; and so is our felicity : and we may be reconciled to poverty and a low fortune, if we suffer contentedness and the grace of God to make the proportions. For no man is poor that does not think himself so : but if, in a full fortune, with impatience he desires more, he proclaims his wants and his beggarly condition. But because this grace of contentedness was the sum of all the old moral philosophy, and a great duty in Christianity, and of most universal use in the whole course of our lives, and the only instrument to ease the burdens of the world and the enmities of sad chances, it will not be amiss to press it by the proper arguments, by which God hath bound it upon our spirits, it being fastened by reason and religion, by duty and interest, by necessity and conveniency, by example, and by the proposition of excellent rewards, no less than peace and felicity.

Contentedness in all estates is a duty of religion ; it is the great reasonableness of complying with the Divine Providence, which governs all the world, and hath so ordered us in the administration of his great family. He were a strange fool, that should be angry, because dogs and sheep need no shoes, and yet himself is full of care to get some. God hath supplied those needs to them by natural provisions, and to thee by an artificial : for he hath given thee reason to learn a trade, or some means to make or buy them, so that it only differs in the manner of our provision ; and which had you rather want, shoes or reason ? And my patron, that hath given me a farm, is freer to me, than if he gives a loaf ready baked. But, however, all these gifts come from him, and therefore it is fit he should dispense them as he pleases ; and if we murmur here, we may, at the next melancholy, be troubled, that God did not make us to be angels or stars. For if that which we are or have do not content us, we may be troubled for every thing in the world, which is besides our being or possessions.

God is the master of the scenes ; we must not choose which part we shall act ; it concerns us only to be careful that we do it well, always saying, " If this please God, let it be as it is : " and we who pray, that God's

will may be done in earth as it is in heaven, must remember, that the angels do whatsoever is commanded them, and go wherever they are sent, and refuse no circumstances: and if their employment be crossed by a higher degree, they sit down in peace, and rejoice in the event. Do thou so likewise: keep the station, where God hath placed you, and you shall never long for things without, but sit at home, feasting upon the Divine Providence and thy own reason, by which we are taught, that it is necessary and reasonable to submit to God.

For is not all the world God's family? Are not we his creatures? Are we not as clay in the hand of the potter? Do we not live upon his meat, and move by his strength, and do our work by his light? Are we any thing, but what we are from him? And shall there be a mutiny among the flocks and herds, because their lord or their shepherd chooses their pastures, and suffers them not to wander into deserts and unknown ways? If we choose, we do it so foolishly, that we cannot like it long, and most commonly not at all: but God, who can do what he pleases, is wise to choose safely for us, affectionate to comply with our needs, and powerful to execute all his wise decrees. Here therefore is the wisdom of the contented man, to let God choose for him: for when we have given up our wills to him, and stand in that station of the battle, where our great general hath placed us, our spirits must needs rest, while our conditions have, for their security, the power, the wisdom, and the charity of God.

Contentedness, in all accidents, brings great peace of spirit, and is the great and only instrument of temporal felicity. It removes the sting from the accident, and makes a man not to depend upon chance, and the uncertain dispositions of men for his well-being, but only on God and his own spirit. We ourselves make our fortunes good or bad, and when God lets loose a tyrant upon us, or a sickness, or scorn, or a lessened fortune, if we fear to die, or know not to be patient, or are proud, or covetous, then the calamity sits heavy on us. But if we know how to manage a noble principle, and fear not death so much as a dishonest action, and think impatience a worse evil than a fever, and pride to be the biggest disgrace, and poverty to be infinitely desirable before the torments of covetousness; then we who now think vice to be so easy, and make it so familiar, and think the cure so impossible, shall quickly be of another mind, and reckon these accidents amongst things eligible.

But no man can be happy, that hath great hopes and great fears of things without, and events depending upon other men, or upon the chances of fortune. The rewards of virtue are certain, and our provisions for our natural support are certain; or if we want meat till we die, then we die of that disease, and there are many worse than to die with an atrophy or consumption, or unapt and coarser nourishment. But he that suffers a transporting passion concerning things within the power of others, is free from sorrow and amazement no longer than his enemy shall give him leave; and it is ten to one but he shall be smitten then and there, where it shall most trouble him: for so the adder teaches us, where to strike, by her curious and fearful defending of her head. The old Stoics, when you told them of a sad story, would still answer "*What is that to me?*"—Yes, for the tyrant hath sentenced you also to prison.—Well, what is that? He will put a chain upon my leg; but he cannot bind my soul.—No: but he will kill you.—Then I will die. If presently, let me go, that I may presently

be freer than himself: but if not till anon or to-morrow, I will dine first, or sleep, or do what reason or nature calls for, as at other times." This, in Gentile philosophy, is the same with the discourse of St Paul,* "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and suffer need."

We are in the world, like men playing at tables; the chance is not in our power, but to play it is; and when it is fallen we must manage it as we can; and let nothing trouble us, but when we do a base action, or speak like a fool, or think wickedly: these things God hath put into our power; but concerning those things which are wholly in the choice of another, they cannot fall under our deliberation, and therefore neither are they fit for our passions. My fear may make me miserable, but it cannot prevent what another hath in his power and purpose: and prosperities can only be enjoyed by them who fear not at all to lose them; since the amazement and passion concerning the future takes off all the pleasure of the present possession. Therefore if thou hast lost thy land, do not also lose thy constancy: and if thou must die a little sooner, yet do not die impatiently. For no chance is evil to him that is content, and to a man nothing is miserable, unless it be unreasonable. No man can make another man to be his slave unless he hath first enslaved himself to life and death, to pleasure or pain, to hope or fear: command these passions, and you are freer than the Parthian kings.

INSTRUMENTS OR EXERCISES TO PROCURE CONTENTEDNESS.

Upon the strength of these premises we may reduce this virtue to practice by its proper instruments first, and then by some more special considerations or arguments of content.

1. When any thing happens to our displeasure, let us endeavour to take off its trouble by turning it into spiritual or artificial advantage, and handle it on that side in which it may be useful to the designs of reason. For there is nothing but hath a double handle, or at least we may have two hands to apprehend it. When an enemy reproaches us, let us look on him as an impartial relator of our faults, for he will tell thee truer than thy fondest friend will; and thou mayest call them precious balms, though they break thy head, and forgive his anger, while thou makest use of the plainness of his declamation. "The ox, when he is weary, treads surest:" and if there be nothing else in the disgrace, but that it makes us to walk warily, and tread sure for fear of our enemies, that is better than to be flattered into pride and carelessness. This is the charity of Christian philosophy, which expounds the sense of the Divine Providence fairly, and reconciles us to it by a charitable construction: and we may as well refuse all physic, if we consider it only as unpleasant in the taste; and we may find fault with the rich valleys of Thasus, because they are circled by sharp mountains: but so also we may be in charity with every unpleasant accident, because, though it taste bitter, it is intended for health and medicine.

If, therefore, thou fallest from thy employment in public, take sanctuary

* Phil. iv. 11, 12. 1 Tim. vi. 6. Heb. xiii. 5.

in an honest retirement, being indifferent to thy gain abroad, or thy safety at home. If thou art out of favour with thy prince, secure the favour of the King of kings, and then there is no harm can come to thee. And when Zeno Citiensis lost all his goods in a storm, he retired to the studies of philosophy, to his short cloak and a severe life, and gave thanks to fortune for his prosperous mischance. When the north winds blows hard, and it rains sadly, none but fools sit down in it and cry ; wise people defend themselves against it with a warm garment, or a good fire and a dry roof. When a storm of a sad mischance beats upon our spirits, turn it into some advantage, by observing where it can serve another end, either of religion or prudence, of more safety or less envy : it will turn into something that is good, if we list to make it so ; at least it may make us weary of the world's vanity, and take off our confidence from uncertain riches, and make our spirits to dwell in those regions, where content dwells essentially. If it does any good to our souls, it hath made more than sufficient recompense for all the temporal affliction. He that threw a stone at a dog, and hit his cruel step-mother, said, that although he intended it otherwise, yet the stone was not quite lost : and if we fail in the first design, if we bring it home to another equally to content us, or more to profit us, then we have put our conditions past the power of chance ; and this was called, in the old Greek comedy, “ a being revenged on fortune by becoming philosophers,” and turning the chance into reason or religion : for so a wise man shall overrule his stars, and have a greater influence upon his own content than all the constellations and planets of the firmament.

2. Never compare thy condition with those above thee : but, to secure thy content, look upon those thousands with whom thou wouldest not, for any interest, change thy fortune and condition. A soldier must not think himself unprosperous, if he be not successful as the son of Philip, or cannot grasp a fortune as big as the Roman empire. Be content, that thou are not lessened as was Pyrrhus ; or if thou beest, that thou are not routed like Crassus : and when that comes to thee, it is a great prosperity that thou art not caged and made a spectacle, like Bajazet, or thy eyes were not pulled out, like Zedekiah's, or that thou wert not flayed alive, like Valerian. If thou admirest the greatness of Xerxes, look also on those that digged the mountain Athos, or whose ears and noses were cut off, because the Hellespont carried away the bridge. It is a fine thing (thou thinkest) to be carried on men's shoulders : but give God thanks, that thou art not forced to carry a rich fool upon thy shoulders, as those poor men do whom thou beholdest. There are but a few kings in mankind ; but many thousands who are very miserable, if compared to thee. However it is a huge folly rather to grieve for the good of others than to rejoice for that good which God hath given us of our own.

And yet there is no wise or good man that would change persons or conditions entirely with any man in the world. It may be, he would have one man's wealth added to himself, or the power of a second, or the learning of a third ; but still he would receive these into his own person, because he loves that best, and therefore esteems it best and therefore overvalues all that which he is, before all that which any other man in the world can be. Would any man be Dives to have his wealth, or Judas for his office, or Saul for his kingdom, or Absalom for his beauty, or Achitophel for his policy ? It is likely he would wish all these, and yet he would be the same

person still. For every man hath desires of his own, and objects just fitted to them, without which he cannot be, unless he were not himself. And let every man, that loves himself so well as to love himself before all the world, consider if he have not something for which in the whole he values himself far more than he can value any man else. There is, therefore, no reason to take the finest feathers from all the winged nation to deck that bird, that thinks already she is more valuable than any of the inhabitants of the air. Either change all or none. Cease to love yourself best, or be content with that portion of being and blessing for which you love yourself so well.

3. It conduces much to our content, if we pass by those things which happen to our trouble, and consider that which is pleasing and prosperous, that, by the representation of the better, the worse may be blotted out: and, at the worst, you have enough to keep you alive, and to keep up and to improve your hopes of heaven. If I be overthrown in my suit at law, yet my house is left me still and my land; or I have a virtuous wife, or hopeful children, or kind friends, or good hopes. If I have lost one child, it may be I have two or three still left me. Or else reckon the blessings, which already you have received, and therefore be pleased in the change and variety of affairs, to receive evil from the hand of God as well as good. Antipater of Tarsus used this art to support his sorrows on his death-bed, and reckoned the good things of his past life, not forgetting to recount it as a blessing, an argument that God took care of him, that he had a prosperous journey from Cilicia to Athens. Or else please thyself with hopes of the future: for we were born with this sadness upon us; and it was a change that brought us into it, and a change may bring us out again. Harvest will come, and then every farmer is rich, at least for a month or two. It may be thou art entered into the cloud, which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows.

Now suppose thyself in as great a sadness as ever did load thy spirit, wouldst thou not bear it cheerfully and nobly if thou wert sure that within a certain space, some strange excellent fortune would relieve thee, and enrich thee, and recompense thee so as to overflow all thy hopes and thy desires and capacities? Now then, when a sadness lies heavy upon thee, remember that thou art a Christian designed to the inheritance of Jesus: and what dost thou think concerning thy great fortune, thy lot and portion of eternity? Dost thou think, thou shalt be saved or damned? Indeed if thou thinkest thou shalt perish, I cannot blame thee to be sad, till thy heart-strings crack: but then why art thou troubled at the loss of thy money? What should a damned man do with money, which in so great a sadness it is impossible for him to enjoy? Did ever any man upon the rack afflict himself, because he had received a cross answer from his mistress? or call for the particulars of a purchase upon the gallows? If thou dost really believe thou shalt be damned, I do not say, it will cure the sadness of thy poverty, but it will swallow it up. But if thou believest thou shalt be saved, consider how great is that joy, how infinite is that change, how unspeakable is the glory, how excellent is the recompense, for all the sufferings in the world, if they were all laden upon the spirit? So that let thy condition be what it will, if thou considerest thy own present condition, and comparest it to thy future possibility, thou canst not feel the present smart of a cross fortune to any great degree, either because thou

hast a far bigger sorrow, or a far bigger joy. Here thou art but a stranger travelling to thy country, where the glories of a kingdom are prepared for thee; it is therefore a huge folly to be much afflicted, because thou hast a less convenient inn to lodge in by the way.

But these arts of looking forwards and backwards, are more than enough to support the spirit of a Christian: there is no man but hath blessings enough in present possession to outweigh the evils of a great affliction. Tell the joints of thy body, and do not accuse the universal Providence for a lame leg, or the want of a finger, when all the rest is perfect, and you have a noble soul, a particle of divinity, the image of God himself; that, by the want of a finger, you may the better know how to estimate the remaining parts, and to account for every degree of the surviving blessings. Aristippus, in a great suit at law, lost a farm, and to a gentleman, who in civility pitied, and deplored his loss, he answered, "I have two farms left still, and that is more than I have lost, and more than you have by one." If you miss an office, for which you stood candidate, then, besides that you are quit of the cares and the envy of it, you still have all those excellences, which rendered you capable to receive it, and they are better than the best office in the commonwealth. If your estate be lessened, you need the less to care who governs the province, whether he be rude or gentle. I am crossed in my journey, and yet I escaped robbers; and I consider, that if I had been set upon by villains, I would have redeemed that evil by this which I now suffer, and have counted it a deliverance. Or if I did fall into the hands of thieves, yet they did not steal my land. Or I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me: what now? let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and, unless I list they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too; and still I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate, I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself. And he that hath so many causes of joy, and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, who loses all these pleasures, and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns. Such a person is fit to bear Nero company in his funeral sorrow for the loss of one of Poppea's hairs, or help to mourn for Lesbia's sparrow: and because he loves it, he deserves to starve in the midst of plenty, and to want comfort, while he is encircled with blessings.

4. Enjoy the present whatsoever it be, and be not solicitous for the future: for if you take your foot from the present standing, and thrust it forward towards to-morrow's event, you are in a restless condition: it is like refusing to quench your present thirst, by fearing you shall want drink the next day. If it be well to-day, it is madness to make the present miserable by fearing it may be ill to-morrow; when your belly is full of to-day's dinner, to fear you shall want the next day's supper: for it may be you shall not, and then to what purpose was this day's affliction? But if to-morrow you shall want, your sorrow will come time enough, though

you do not hasten it : let your trouble tarry, till its own day comes. But if it chance to be ill to-day, do not increase it by the care of to-morrow. Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them, and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly : for this day is only ours : we are dead to yesterday, and we are not yet born to the morrow. He, therefore that enjoys the present, if it be good, enjoys as much as is possible ; and if only that day's trouble leans upon him, it is singular and finite. "Sufficient to the day (said Christ) is the evil thereof : " sufficient, but not intolerable. But if we look abroad, and bring into one day's thoughts the evil of many, certain and uncertain, what will be, and what will never be, our load will be as intolerable as it is unreasonable. To reprove this instrument of discontent, the ancients feigned, that in hell stood a man twisting a rope of hay ; and still he twisted on, suffering an ass to eat up all that was finished : so miserable is he, who thrusts his passions forwards towards future events, and suffers all that he may enjoy to be lost and devoured by folly and inconsideration, thinking nothing fit to be enjoyed but that which is not or cannot be had. Just so, many young persons are loath to die, and therefore desire to live to old age, and when they are come thither, are troubled that they are come to that state of life, to which before they were come, they were hugely afraid they should never come.

5. Let us prepare our minds against changes, always expecting them, that we be not surprised, when they come : for nothing is so great an enemy to tranquillity and a contented spirit, as the amazement and confusions of unreadiness and inconsideration : and when our fortunes are violently changed, our spirits are unchanged, if they always stood in the suburbs and expectation of sorrows "O death, how bitter art thou to a man that is at rest in his possessions !" And to the rich man, who had promised to himself ease and fulness for many years, it was a sad arrest, that his soul was surprised the first night : but the apostles, who every day knocked at the gate of death, and looked upon it continually, went to their martyrdom in peace and evenness.

6. Let us often frame to ourselves and represent to our considerations, the images of those blessings we have, just as we usually understand them, when we want them. Consider how desirable health is to a sick man, or liberty to a prisoner ; and if but a fit of the toothach seizes us with violence, all those troubles which in our health afflicted us, disband instantly, and seem inconsiderable. He that in his health is troubled that he is in debt, and spends sleepless nights, and refuses meat because of his infelicity, let him fall into a fit of the stone or a high fever, he despises the arrest of all his first troubles, and is as a man unconcerned. Remember, then, that God hath given thee a blessing, the want of which is infinitely more trouble than thy present debt or poverty or loss ; and therefore is now more to be valued in the possession, and ought to outweigh thy trouble. The very private blessings, the blessings of immunity, safeguard, liberty, and integrity, which we commonly enjoy, deserve the thanksgiving of a whole life. If God should send a cancer upon thy face, or a wolf into thy side, if he should spread a crust of leprosy upon thy skin, what wouldst thou give to be but as now thou art ? Wouldest thou not, on that condition, be as poor as I am, or as the meanest of thy brethren ? Would you not choose your present loss and affliction as a thing extremely eligible, and a redemption to thee, if thou mightest exchange the other for this ? Thou art quit from a thousand

calamities, every one of which, if it were upon thee, would make thee insensible of thy present sorrow : and therefore let thy joy (which should be as great for thy freedom from them, as is thy sadness when thou feelest any of them) do the same cure upon thy discontent. For if we be not extremely foolish or vain, thankless or senseless, a great joy is more apt to cure sorrow and discontent, than a great trouble is. I have known an affectionate wife, when she hath been in fear of parting with her beloved husband, heartily desire of God his life or society upon any conditions that were not sinful ; and choose to beg with him, rather than to feast without him : and the same person hath, upon that consideration, borne poverty nobly, when God hath heard her prayer in the other matter. What wise man in the world is there, who does not prefer a small fortune with peace before a great one with contention, and war, and violence ? And then he is no longer wise, if he alters his opinion when he hath his wish.

7. If you will secure a contented spirit, you must measure your desires by your fortune and condition, not your fortunes by your desires : that is, be governed by your needs, not by your fancy ; by nature, not by evil customs and ambitious principles. He that would shoot an arrow out of a plough, or hunt a hare with an elephant, is not unfortunate for missing the mark or prey ; but he is foolish for choosing such unapt instruments : and so is he, that runs after his content with appetites not springing from natural needs, but from artificial, fantastical, and violent necessities. These are not to be satisfied ; or if they were, a man hath chosen an evil instrument towards his content ; nature did not intend rest to a man by filling of such desires. Is that beast better, that hath two or three mountains to graze on, than a little bee that feeds on dew or manna, and lives upon what falls every morning from the storehouses of heaven, clouds, and providence ? Can a man quench his thirst better out of a river than a full urn, or drink better from the fountain, which is finely paved with marble, than when it swells over the green turf ? Pride and artificial gluttonies do but adulterate nature, making our diet healthless, our appetites impatient and unsatisfiable, and the taste mixed, fantastical, and meretricious. But that which we miscall poverty, is indeed nature ; and its proportions are the just measures of a man, and the best instruments of content. But when we create needs, that God or nature never made, we have erected to ourselves an infinite stock of trouble, that can have no period. Sempronius complained of want of clothes, and was much troubled for a new suit, being ashamed to appear in the theatre with his gown a little threadbare ; but when he got it, and gave his old clothes to Codrus, the poor man was ravished with joy, and went and gave God thanks for his new purchase ; and Codrus was made richly fine and cheerfully warm by that which Sempronius was ashamed to wear ; and yet their natural needs were both alike : the difference only was, that Sempronius had some artificial and fantastical necessities superinduced, which Codrus had not ; and was harder to be relieved, and could not have joy at so cheap a rate ; because he only lived according to nature, the other by pride and ill customs, and measures taken by other men's eyes and tongues, and artificial needs. He that propounds to his fancy things greater than himself or his needs, and is discontented and troubled, when he fails of such purchases, ought not to accuse Providence, or blame his fortune, but his folly. God and nature made no

more needs than they mean to satisfy ; and he that will make more, must look for satisfaction where he can.

8. In all troubles and sadder accidents, let us take sanctuary in religion, and by innocence cast out anchors for our souls to keep them from shipwreck, though they be not kept from storm. For what philosophy shall comfort a villain, that is haled to the rack for murdering his prince, or that is broken upon the wheel for sacrilege ? His cup is full of pure and unmingled sorrow : his body is rent with torment, his name with ignominy ; his soul with shame and sorrow, which are to last eternally. But when a man suffers in a good cause, or is afflicted, and yet walks not perversely with his God, then “ Anytus and Melitus may kill me, but they cannot hurt me :” then St Paul’s character is engraved in the forehead of our fortune ; * “ We are troubled on every side, but not distressed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed.” “ And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ?” † For indeed every thing in the world is indifferent, but sin : and all the scorplings of the sun are very tolerable in respect of the burnings of a fever or a calenture. The greatest evils are from within us ; and from ourselves also we must look for our greatest good ; for God is the fountain of it, but reaches it to us by our own hands : and when all things look sadly round about us, then only we shall find how excellent a fortune it is to have God for our friend ; and, of all friendships, that only is created to support us in our needs. For it is sin that turns an ague into a fever, and a fever to the plague, fear into despair, anger into rage, and loss into madness, and sorrow to amazement and confusion : but if either we were innocent, or else, by the sadness, are made penitent, we are put to school, or into the theatre, either to learn how, or else actually to combat for a crown ; the accident may serve an end of mercy, but is not a messenger of wrath.

Let us therefore not be governed by external, and present, and seeming things ; nor let us make the same judgment of things that common and weak understandings do ; nor make other men, and they not the wisest, to be judges of our felicity, so that we be happy or miserable, as they please to think us : but let reason, and experience, and religion, and hope relying upon the divine promises, be the measure of our judgment. No wise man did ever describe felicity without virtue ; and no good man did ever think, virtue could depend upon the variety of a good or bad fortune. It is no evil to be poor, but to be vicious and impatient.

MEANS TO OBTAIN CONTENT BY WAY OF CONSIDERATIONS.

To these exercises and spiritual instruments, if we add the following considerations concerning the nature and circumstances of human chance, we may better secure our peace. For as to children, who are afraid of vain images, we use to persuade confidence by making them to handle and look nearer such things, that when, in such a familiarity, they perceive them innocent, they may overcome their fears : so must timorous, fantastical, sad, and discontented persons, be treated ; they must be made to consider

* 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

† 1 Pet. iii. 13 ; iv. 15, 16.

and on all sides to look upon the accident, and to take all its dimensions, and consider its consequences, and to behold the purpose of God, and the common mistakes of men, and the evil sentences they usually pass upon them. For then we shall perceive, that, like colts of unmanaged horses, we start at dead bones and lifeless blocks, things that are inactive as they are innocent. But if we secure our hopes and our fears, and make them moderate and within government, we may the sooner overcome the evil of the accident ; for nothing that we feel is so bad as what we fear.

1. Consider that the universal providence of God hath so ordered it, that the good things of nature and fortune are divided, that we may know how to bear our own, and relieve each other's wants and imperfections. It is not for a man, but for a God, to have all excellences and all felicities. He supports my poverty with his wealth ; I counsel and instruct him with my learning and experience. He hath many friends, I many children : he hath no heir, I have no inheritance : and any one great blessing, together with common portions of nature and necessity, is a fair fortune, if it be but health or strength, or the swiftness of Ahimaaz. For it is an unreasonable discontent to be troubled, that I have not so good cocks or dogs or horses as my neighbour, being more troubled that I want one thing that I need not, than thankful for having received all that I need. Nero had this disease, that he was not content with the fortune of the whole empire, but put the fiddlers to death for being more skilful in the trade, than he was : and Dionysius the elder was so angry at Philoxenus for singing, and with Plato for disputing, better than he did, that he sold Plato a slave into Ægina, and condemned the other to the quarries.

This consideration is to be enlarged by adding to it, that there are some instances of fortune and a fair condition, that cannot stand with some others, but if you desire this, you must lose that, and unless you be content with one, you lose the comfort of both. If you covet learning, you must have leisure and a retired life : if to be a politician, you must go abroad and get experience, and do all businesses, and keep all company, and have no leisure at all. If you will be rich, you must be frugal : if you will be popular, you must be bountiful : if a philosopher, you must despise riches. The Greek, that designed to make the most exquisite picture that could be imagined, fancied the eye of Chione, and the hair of Pægnium, and Tarsia's lip, Philenium's chin, and the forehead of Delphia, and set all these upon Milphidippa's neck, and thought that he should outdo both art and nature. But when he came to view the proportions, he found, that what was excellent in Tarsia, did not agree with the other excellency of Philenium ; and although, singly, they were rare pieces, yet in the whole, they made a most ugly face. The dispersed excellences and blessings of many men, if given to one, would not make a handsome, but a monstrous fortune. Use therefore that faculty which nature hath given thee, and thy education hath made actual, and thy calling hath made a duty. But if thou desirest to be a saint, refuse not his persecution : if thou wouldst be famous as Epaminondas or Fabricius, accept also of their poverty ; for that added lustre to their persons, and envy to their fortune, and their virtue without it could not have been so excellent. Let Euphorion sleep quietly with his old rich wife ; and let Medius drink on with Alexander ; and remember thou canst not have the riches of the first, unless you have the old wife too : nor the favour, which the second had with his prince, unless you buy it at

his price, that is, lay thy sobriety down at first, and thy health a little after ; and then their condition, though it look splendidly, yet when you handle it on all sides, it will prick your fingers.

2. Consider, how many excellent personages in all ages have suffered as great or greater calamities than this, which now tempts thee to impatience. Agis was the most noble of the Greeks, and yet his wife bore a child by Alcibiades : and Philip was prince of Ituræa, and yet his wife ran away with his brother Herod into Galilee ; and certainly, in a great fortune, that was a great calamity. But these are but single instances. Almost all the ages of the world have noted, that their most eminent scholars were most eminently poor, some by choice, but most by chance, and an inevitable decree of Providence : and, in the whole sex of women, God hath decreed the sharpest pains of child-birth, to show, that there is no state exempt from sorrow, and yet that the weakest persons have strength more than enough to bear the greatest evil : and the greatest queens, and the mothers of saints and apostles, have no charter of exemption from this sad sentence. But the Lord of men and angels was also the King of sufferings : and if thy coarse robe trouble thee, remember the swaddling clothes of Jesus : if thy bed be uneasy, yet it is not worse than his manger ; and it is no sadness to have a thin table, if thou callest to mind, that the King of heaven and earth was fed with a little breast-milk : and yet besides this, he suffered all the sorrows which we deserved. We therefore have great reason to sit down upon our own hearth, and warm ourselves at our own fires, and feed upon content at home : for it were a strange pride to expect to be more gently treated by the Divine providence, than the best and wisest men, than apostles and saints, nay, the Son of the eternal God, the heir of both the worlds.

This consideration may be enlarged by surveying all the states and families of the world : and he that at once saw Ægina and Megara, Pyræus and Corinth, lie gasping in their ruins, and almost buried in their own heaps, had reason to blame Cicero for mourning impatiently the death of one woman. In the most beauteous and splendid fortune, there are many cares and proper interruptions and allays : in the fortune of a prince there is not the coarse robe of beggary : but there are infinite cares ; and the judge sits upon the tribunal with great ceremony and ostentation of fortune, and yet, at his house or in his breast, there is something, that causes him to sigh deeply. Pittacus was a wise and valiant man, but his wife overthrew the table when he had invited his friends : upon which the good man, to excuse her incivility and his own misfortune, said, "That every man had one evil, and he was most happy that had but that alone." And if nothing else happens, yet sicknesses so often do embitter the fortune and content of a family, that a physician in a few years, and with the practice upon a very few families, gets experience enough to administer to almost all diseases.

3. There are many accidents, which are esteemed great calamities, and yet we have reason enough to bear them well and unconcernedly ; for they neither touch our bodies nor our souls : our health and our virtue remain entire, our life and our reputation. It may be I am slighted, or I have received ill language ; but my head aches not for it, neither hath it broke my thigh, nor taken away my virtue, unless I lose my charity or my patience. Inquire, therefore, what you are the worse, either in your soul or in your body, for what hath happened : for upon this very stock many evils will

disappear, since the body and the soul make up the whole man. And when the daughter of Stilpo proved a wanton, he said it was none of his sin, and therefore there was no reason it should be his misery. And if an enemy hath taken all that from a prince, whereby he was a king : he may refresh himself by considering all that is left him, whereby he is a man.

4. Consider, that sad accidents and a state of affliction is a school of virtue : it reduces our spirits to soberness, and our counsels to moderation : it corrects levity, and interrupts the confidence of sinning. “ It is good for me (said David) that I have been afflicted, for thereby I have learned thy law.”* And “ I know (O Lord) that thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.” For God, who in mercy and wisdom governs the world, would never have suffered so many sadnesses, and have sent them especially to the most virtuous and the wisest men, but that he intends they should be the seminary of comfort, the nursery of virtue, the exercise of wisdom, the trial of patience, the venturing for a crown, and the gate of glory.

5. Consider, that afflictions are oftentimes the occasions of great temporal advantages ; and we must not look upon them, as they sit down heavily upon us, but as they serve some of God’s ends, and the purposes of universal Providence. And when a prince fights justly, and yet unprosperously, if he could see all those reasons for which God hath so ordered it, he would think it the most reasonable thing in the world, and that it would be very ill to have it otherwise. If a man could have opened one of the pages of the Divine counsel, and could have seen the event of Joseph’s being sold to the merchants of Amalek, he might, with much reason, have dried up the young man’s tears : and when God’s purposes are opened in the events of things, as it was in the case of Joseph, when he sustained his father’s family and became lord of Egypt, then we see, what ill judgment we made of things, and that we were passionate as children, and transported with sense and mistaken interest. The case of Themistocles was almost like that of Joseph ; for being banished into Egypt, he also grew in favour with the king, and told his wife, “ he had been undone, unless he had been undone.” For God esteems it one of his glories, that he brings good out of evil ; and therefore it were but reason, we should trust God to govern his own world as he pleases ; and that we should patiently wait till the change cometh, or the reason be discovered.

And this consideration is also of great use to them who envy at the prosperity of the wicked, and the success of persecutors, and the baits of fishes, and the bread of dogs. God fails not to sow blessings in the long furrows, which the ploughers plough upon the back of the church : and this success, which troubles us, will be a great glory to God, and a great benefit to his saints and servants, and a great ruin to the persecutors, who shall have but the fortune of Theramenes, one of the thirty tyrants of Athens, who escaped, when his house fell upon him, and was shortly after put to death with torments by his colleagues in the tyranny.

To which also may be added, that the great evils which happen to the best and wisest men, are one of the great arguments upon the strength of which we can expect felicity to our souls, and the joys of another world. And certainly they are then very tolerable and eligible, when, with so great

* Psalm cxix. part 10. ver. 3.

advantages, they minister to the faith and hope of a Christian. But if we consider what unspeakable tortures are provided for the wicked to all eternity, we should not be troubled to see them prosperous here, but rather wonder, that their portion in this life is not bigger, and that ever they should be sick, or crossed, or affronted, or troubled with the contradiction and disease of their own vices, since, if they were fortunate beyond their own ambition, it could not make them recompense for one hour's torment in hell, which yet they shall have for their eternal portion.

After all these considerations, derived from sense and experience, grace and reason, there are two remedies still remaining, and they are necessity and time.

6. For it is but reasonable to bear that accident patiently which God sends, since impatience does but entangle us, like the fluttering of a bird in a net, but cannot at all ease our trouble, or prevent the accident: it must be run through, and therefore it were better we compose ourselves to a patient, than to a troubled and miserable suffering.

7. But, however, if you will not otherwise be cured, time at last will do it alone; and then consider, do you mean to mourn always, or but for a time? If always, you are miserable and foolish. If for a time, then why will you not apply those reasons to your grief at first, with which you will cure it at last? or if you will not cure it with reason, see how little of a man there is in you, that you suffer time to do more with you than reason or religion! You suffer yourself to be cured, just as a beast or a tree is; let it alone, and the thing will heal itself; but this is neither honourable to thy person, nor of reputation to thy religion. However, be content to bear thy calamity, because thou art sure, in a little time, it will sit down gentle and easy: for to a mortal man no evil is immortal. And here let the worst thing happen that can, it will end in death, and we commonly think that to be near enough.

8. Lastly, of those things which are reckoned amongst evils, some are better than their contraries; and to a good man, the very worst is tolerable.

POVERTY OR A LOW FORTUNE.

1. Poverty is better than riches, and a mean fortune to be chosen before a great and splendid one. It is indeed despised, and makes men contemptible; it exposes a man to the insolence of evil persons, and leaves a man defenceless: it is always suspected: its stories are accounted lies, and all its counsels follies: it puts a man from all employment: it makes a man's discourses tedious and his society troublesome. This is the worst of it: and yet all this, and far worse than this, the apostles suffered for being Christians: and Christianity itself may be esteemed an affliction as well as poverty, if this be all that can be said against it; for the apostles and the most eminent Christians were really poor, and were used contemptuously: and yet, that poverty is despised may be an argument to commend it, if it be despised by none but persons vicious and ignorant. However, certain it is, that a great fortune is a great vanity, and riches is nothing but danger, trouble, and temptation; like a garment that is too long, and bears a train; not so useful to one but it is troublesome to two, to him that bears the one part upon his shoulders, and to him that bears the other part in his hand. But po-

verty is the sister of a good mind, the parent of sober counsels, and the nurse of all virtue.

For what is it that you admire in the fortune of a great king? Is it, that he always goes in a great company? You may thrust yourself into the same crowd, or go often to church, and then you have as great a company as he hath; and that may, upon as good grounds, please you as him, that is, justly neither; for so impertinent and useless pomp, and the other circumstances of his distance, are not made for him, but for his subjects, that they may learn to separate him from common usages, and be taught to be governed. But if you look upon them as fine things in themselves, you may quickly alter your opinion, when you shall consider, that they cannot cure the toothach, nor make one wise, or fill the belly, or give one night's sleep (though they help to break many), not satisfying any appetite of nature, or reason, or religion: but they are states of greatness, which only make it possible for a man to be made extremely miserable. And it was long ago observed by the Greek tragedians, and from them by Arrianus, saying, "That all our tragedies are of kings and princes, and rich or ambitious personages; but you never see a poor man have a part unless it be as a chorus, or to fill up the scenes, to dance or to be derided; but the kings and great generals. First (says he), they begin with joy, 'Crown the houses:' but about the third or fourth act they cry out, 'O Citheron! why didst thou spare my life to reserve me for this more sad calamity?'" And this is really true in the great accidents of the world: for a great estate hath great crosses, and a mean fortune hath but small ones. It may be, the poor man loses a cow; or if his child dies, he is quit of his biggest care; but such an accident in a rich and splendid family doubles upon the spirits of the parents. Or, it may be, the poor man is troubled to pay his rent, and that is his biggest trouble: but it is a bigger care to secure a great fortune in a troubled estate, or with equal greatness, or with the circumstances of honour, and the niceness of reputation to defend a law-suit; and that, which will secure a common man's whole estate, is not enough to defend a great man's honour.

And therefore it was not without mystery observed among the ancients, that they who made gods of gold and silver, of hope and fear, peace and fortune, garlic and onions, beasts and serpents, and a quartan ague, yet never deified money: meaning, that however wealth was admired by common or abused understandings; yet from riches, that is, from that proportion of good things which is beyond the necessities of nature, no moment could be added to a man's real content or happiness. Corn from Sardinia, heads of Calabrian cattle, meadows through which pleasant Liris glides, silks from Tyrus, and golden chalices to drown my health in, are nothing but instruments of vanity or sin, and suppose a disease in the soul of him that longs for them, or admires them. And this I have elsewhere represented more largely; to which I here add, that riches have very great dangers to their souls, not only who covet them, but to all that have them. For if a great personage undertakes an action passionately and upon great interest, let him manage it indiscreetly, let the whole design be unjust, let it be acted with all the malice and impotency in the world, he shall have enough to flatter him, but not enough to reprove him. He had need be a bold man, that shall tell his patron, he is going to hell; and that prince had need be a good man, that shall suffer such a monitor; and though

it be a strange kind of civility, and an evil dutifulness in friends and relatives to suffer him to perish without reproof or medicine, rather than to seem unmannerly to a great sinner; yet it is none of their least infelicities, that their wealth and greatness shall put them into sin, and yet put them past reproof. I need not instance in the habitual intemperance of rich tables, nor the evil accidents and effects of fulness, pride and lust, wantonness and softness of disposition, huge talking and an imperious spirit, despite of religion, and contempt of poor persons; at the best, "it is a great temptation for a man to have in his power whatsoever he can have in his sensual desires:"* and therefore riches is a blessing, like to a present made of a whole vintage to a man in a hectic fever; he will be much tempted to drink of it; and if he does, he is inflamed, and may chance to die with the kindness.

Now, besides what hath been already noted in the state of poverty, there is nothing to be accounted for but the fear of wanting necessities; of which if a man could be secured, that he might live free from care, all the other parts of it might be reckoned amongst the advantages of wise and sober persons, rather than objections against that state of fortune.

But concerning this I consider, that there must needs be great security to all Christians, since Christ not only made express promises, that we should have sufficient for this life, but also took great pains and used many arguments to create confidence in us: and such they were, which by their own strength were sufficient, though you abate the authority of the speaker. The Son of God told us, his Father takes care of us: he that knew all his Father's counsels and his whole kindness towards mankind, told us so. How great is that truth, how certain, how necessary, which Christ himself proved by arguments! The excellent words and most comfortable sentences, which are our bills of exchange, upon the credit of which we lay our cares down and receive provisions for our need, are these: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Therefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."† The same discourse is repeated by St Luke:‡ and accordingly our duty is urged, and our confidence abetted, by the disciples of our Lord, in divers places of the Holy Scripture. So St Paul: "Be

* Jam. ii. 5—7.

† Matt. vi. 25, &c.

‡ Luke xii. 22—31

careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”* And again, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”† And yet again, “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper.”‡ And all this is by St Peter summed up in our duty, thus: “Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” Which words he seems to have borrowed out of the fifty-fifth Psalm, v. 23, where David saith the same thing almost in the same words. To which I only add the observation made by him, and the argument of experience; “I have been young, and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.” And now after all this, a fearless confidence in God and concerning a provision of necessities, is so reasonable, that it is become a duty; and he is scarce a Christian, whose faith is so little as to be jealous of God, and suspicious concerning meat and clothes: that man hath nothing in him of the nobleness or confidence of charity.

Does not God provide for all the birds, and beasts, and fishes? Do not the sparrows fly from their bush, and every morning find meat, where they laid it not? Do not the young ravens call to God, and he feeds them? And were it reasonable, that the sons of the family should fear the Father would give meat to the chickens and the servants, his sheep and his dogs, but give none to them? He were a very ill father that should do so; or he were a very foolish son, that should think so of a good father. But, besides the reasonableness of his faith and this hope, we have infinite experience of it. How innocent, how careless, how secure is infancy! and yet how certainly provided for! We have lived at God’s charges all the days of our life, and have (as the Italian proverb says) sat down to meat at the sound of a bell; and hitherto he hath not failed us: we have no reason to suspect him for the future: we do not use to serve men so; and less time of trial creates great confidences in us towards them, who for twenty years together never broke their word with us: and God hath so ordered it, that a man shall have had the experience of many years’ provision, before he shall understand how to doubt; that he may be provided for an answer, against the temptation shall come, and the mercies felt in his childhood may make him fearless, when he is a man. Add to this, that God hath given us his Holy Spirit: he hath promised heaven to us: he hath given us his Son; and we are taught from Scripture to make this inference from hence, “How should not he with him give us all things else?”

THE CHARGE OF MANY CHILDREN.

WE have a title to be provided for, as we are God’s creatures, another title as we are his children, another because God hath promised; and every of our children hath the same title: and therefore it is a huge folly and infidelity to be troubled and full of care, because we have many children. Every child we have to feed, is a new revenue, a new title to God’s care and providence; so that many children are a great wealth: and if it be said,

* Phil. iv. 6.

† 1 Tim. vi. 17.

‡ Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

they are chargeable, it is no more than all wealth and great revenues are. For what difference is it? Titius keeps ten ploughs, Cornelia hath ten children: he hath land enough to employ and to feed all his hinds: she, blessings and promises, and the provisions and the truth of God, to maintain all her children. His hinds and horses eat up all his corn, and her children are sufficiently maintained with her little. They bring in and eat up, and she indeed eats up; but they also bring in from the storehouses of heaven, and the granaries of God: and my children are not so much mine as they are God's; he feeds them in the womb by ways secret and insensible; and would not work a perpetual miracle to bring them forth, and then to starve them.

VIOLENT NECESSITIES.

BUT some men are highly tempted, and are brought to a strait; that, without a miracle, they cannot be relieved: what shall they do? It may be their pride or vanity hath brought the necessity upon them, and it is not a need of God's making; and if it be not, they must cure it themselves, by lessening their desires, and moderating their appetites: and yet, if it be innocent, though unnecessary, God does usually relieve such necessities; and he does not only upon our prayers grant us more than he promised of temporal things, but also he gives many times more than we ask. This is no object for our faith, but ground enough for a temporal and prudent hope; and, if we fail in the particular, God will turn it to a bigger mercy, if we submit to his dispensation, and adore him in the denial. But if it be a matter of necessity, let not any man, by way of impatience, cry out, that God will not work a miracle; for God, by miracle, did give meat and drink to his people in the wilderness, of which he made no particular promise in any covenant: and if all natural means fail, it is certain, that God will rather work a miracle than break his word: he can do that; he cannot do this. Only we must remember, that our portion of temporal things is but food and raiment. God hath not promised us coaches and horses, rich houses and jewels, Tyrian silks and Persian carpets; neither hath he promised to minister to our needs in such circumstances as we shall appoint, but such as himself shall choose. God will enable thee either to pay thy debt (if thou beggest it of him), or else he will pay it for thee; that is, take thy desire as a discharge of thy duty, and pay it to thy creditor in blessings, or in some secret of his providence. It may be he hath laid up the corn, that shall feed thee, in the granary of thy brother; or will clothe thee with his wool. He enabled St Peter to pay his gabel by the ministry of a fish; and Elias to be waited on by a crow, who was both his minister and his steward for provisions: and his holy Son rode in triumph upon an ass, that grazed in another man's pastures. And if God gives to him the dominion, and reserves the use to thee, thou hast the better half of the two: but the charitable man serves God and serves thy need; and both join to provide for thee, and God blesses both. But if he takes away the flesh-pots from thee, he can also alter the appetite, and he hath given thee power and commandment to restrain it: and if he lessens the revenue, he will also shrink the necessity; or if he gives but a very little, he will make it go a great way; or if he sends thee but a coarse diet, he will bless it and make it healthful, and can cure all the anguish of thy poverty by giving thee patience, and the

grace of contentedness. For the grace of God secures you of provisions, and yet the grace of God feeds and supports the spirit in the want of provisions : and if a thin table be apt to enfeeble the spirits of one used to feed better, yet the cheerfulness of a spirit that is blessed will make a thin table become a delicacy, if the man was as well taught as he was fed, and learned his duty when he received the blessing. Poverty, therefore, is in some senses eligible, and to be preferred before riches ; but, in all senses, it is very tolerable.

DEATH OF CHILDREN, OR NEAREST RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

THERE are some persons, who have been noted for being excellent in their lives and passions, rarely innocent, and yet hugely penitent for indiscretions and harmless infirmities ; such as was Paulina, one of the ghostly children of St Jerome ; and yet when any of her children died, she was arrested with a sorrow so great, as brought her to the margent of her grave. And the more tender our spirits are made by religion, the more easy we are to let in grief, if the cause be innocent, and be but in any sense twisted with piety and due affections. To cure which, we may consider, that all the world must die, and therefore to be impatient at the death of a person, concerning whom it was certain and known that he must die, is to mourn, because thy friend or child was not born an angel : and, when thou hast a while made thyself miserable by an importunate and useless grief, it may be thou shalt die thyself, and leave others to their choice, whether they will mourn for thee or no : but, by that time, it will appear, how impertinent that grief was, which served no end of life, and ended in thy own funeral. But what great matter is it, if sparks fly upward, or a stone falls into a pit ; if that which was combustible be burned, or that which was liquid be melted, or that which is mortal, do die ? It is no more than a man sees every day : for every night death hath gotten possession of that day, and we shall never live that day over again ; and when the last day is come, there are no more days left for us to die. And what is sleeping and walking, but living and dying ? what is spring and autumn, youth and old age, morning and evening, but real images of life and death, and really the same to many considerable effects and changes ?

UNTIMELY DEATH.

BUT it is not mere dying, that is pretended by some as the cause of their impatient mourning ; but that the child died young, before he knew good and evil, his right hand from his left, and so lost all his portion of this world, and they know not of what excellency his portion in the next shall be. If he died young, he lost but little : for he understood but little, and had not capacities of great pleasures or great cares ; but yet he died innocent, and before the sweetness of his soul was deflowered and ravished from him by the flames and follies of a froward age ; he went out from the dining-room, before he had fallen into error by the intemperance of his meat, or the deluge of drink : and he hath obtained this favour of God, that his soul hath suffered a less imprisonment, and her load was sooner taken off, that he might, with lesser delays, go and converse with immortal spirits : and the babe is taken into paradise before he knows good and evil

(For that knowledge threw our great father out, and this ignorance returns the child thither.) But (as concerning thy own particular) remove thy thoughts back to those days in which thy child was not born, and you are now but as then you was, and there is no difference, but that you had a son born : and if you reckon that for evil, you are unthankful for the blessing ; if it be good, it is better that you had the blessing for a while, than not at all ; and yet, if he had never been born, this sorrow had not been at all. But be no more displeased at God for giving you a blessing for a while, than you would have been if he had not given it at all ; and reckon that intervening blessing for a gain, but account it not an evil ; and if it be a good, turn it not into sorrow and sadness. But if we have great reason to complain of the calamities and evils of our life, then we have the less reason to grieve, that those whom we loved have so small a portion of evil assigned to them. And it is no small advantage that our children dying young receive : for their condition of a blessed immortality is rendered to them secure by being snatched from the dangers of an evil choice, and carried to their little cells of felicity, where they can weep no more. And this the wisest of the Gentiles understood well, when they forbade any offerings or libations to be made for dead infants, as was usual for their other dead ; as believing they were entered into a secure possession, to which they went with no other condition, but that they passed into it through the way of mortality, and, for a few months, wore an uneasy garment. And let weeping parents say, if they do not think, that the evils their little babes have suffered, are sufficient. If they be, why are they troubled, that they were taken from those many and greater, which, in succeeding years, are great enough to try all the reason and religion which art, and nature, and the grace of God have produced in us, to enable us for such sad contentions ? And, possibly, we may doubt concerning men and women, but we cannot suspect that to infants death can be such an evil, but that it brings to them much more good than it takes from them in this life.

But others can well bear the death of infants : but when they have spent some years of childhood or youth, and are entered into arts and society, when they are hopeful and provided for, when the parents are to reap the comfort of all their fears and cares ; then it breaks the spirit to lose them. This is true in many ; but this is not love to the dead, but to themselves ; for they miss, what they had flattered themselves into by hope and opinion : and if it were kindness to the dead, they may consider, that, since we hope he is gone to God and to rest, it is an ill expression of our love to them, that we weep for their good fortune. For that life is not best which is longest : and when they are descended into the grave, it shall not be inquired how long they have lived, but how well : and yet this shortening of their days is an evil wholly depending upon opinion. For if men did naturally live but twenty years, then we should be satisfied, if they died about sixteen or eighteen ; and yet eighteen years now are as long as eighteen years would be then : and if a man were but of a day's life, it is well if he lasts till evensong, and then says his compline an hour before the time ; and we are pleased, and call not that death immature, if he lives till seventy ; and yet this age is as short of the old periods before and since the flood, as this youth's age (for whom you mourn) is of the present fulness.

Suppose, therefore, a decree passed upon this person (as there have been many upon all mankind), and God hath set him a shorter period; and then we may as well bear the immature death of the young man as the death of the oldest men: for they also are immature and unseasonable in respect of the old periods of many generations. And why are we troubled, that he had arts and sciences before he died? or are we troubled, that he does not live to make use of them? The first is cause of joy, for they are excellent in order to certain ends: and the second cannot be cause of sorrow, because he hath no need to use them, as the case now stands, being provided for with the provisions of an angel, and the manner of eternity. However, the sons and the parents, friends and relatives, are in the world like hours and minutes to a day. The hour comes, and must pass; and some stay by minutes, and they also pass, and shall never return again. But let it be considered, that from the time in which a man is conceived, from that time forward to eternity he shall never cease to be: and let him die young or old, still he hath an immortal soul, and hath laid down his body only for a time, as that which was the instrument of his trouble and sorrow, and the scene of sicknesses and disease. But he is in a more noble manner of being after death than he can be here: and the child may, with more reason, be allowed to cry for leaving his mother's womb for this world, than a man can for changing this world for another.

SUDDEN DEATH OR VIOLENT.

OTHERS are yet troubled at the manner of their child's or friend's death. He was drowned, or lost his head, or died of the plague; and this is a new spring of sorrow. But no man can give a sensible account how it shall be worse for a child to die with drowning in half an hour, than to endure a fever of one-and-twenty days. And if my friend lost his head, as he did not lose his constancy and his religion, he died with huge advantage.

BEING CHILDLESS.

BUT, by this means, I am left without an heir. Well, suppose that thou hast no heir, and I have no inheritance; and there are many kings and emperors that have died childless, many royal lines are extinguished: and Augustus Cæsar was forced to adopt his wife's son to inherit all the Roman greatness. And there are many wise persons that never married; and we read nowhere that any of the children of the apostles did survive their fathers: and all that inherit any thing of Christ's kingdom, come to it by adoption, not by natural inheritance: and to die without a natural heir is no intolerable evil, since it was sanctified in the person of Jesus, who died virgin.

EVIL OR UNFORTUNATE CHILDREN.

AND by his means, we are freed from the greater sorrows of having a fool, a swine, or a goat, to rule after us in our families: and yet even this condition admits of comfort. For all the wild Americans are supposed to be the sons of Dodonaim; and the sons of Jacob are now the most scattered

and despised people in the world. The son of Solomon was but a silly weak man ; and the son of Hezekiah was wicked : and all the fools and barbarous people, all the thieves and pirates, all the slaves and miserable men and women of the world, are the sons and daughters of Noah ; and we must not look to be exempted from that portion of sorrow which God gave to Noah, and Adam, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob : I pray God send us into the lot of Abraham. But if any thing happens worse to us, it is enough for us, that we bear it evenly.

OUR OWN DEATH.

AND how, if you were to die yourself? You know you must. Only be ready for it, by the preparations of a good life : and then it is the greatest good that ever happened to thee ; else there is nothing that can comfort you. But if you have served God in a holy life, send away the women and the weepers ; tell them it is as much intemperance to weep too much as to laugh too much : and when thou art alone, or with fitting company, die as thou shouldest, but do not die impatiently, and like a fox caught in a trap. For if you fear death, you shall never the more avoid it, but you make it miserable. Fannius, that killed himself for fear of death, died as certainly as Portia, that eat burning coals, or Cato, that cut his own throat. To die is necessary and natural, and it may be honourable : but to die poorly, and basely, and sinfully, that alone is it that can make a man unfortunate. No man can be a slave, but he that fears pain, or fears to die. To such a man, nothing but chance and peaceable times can secure his duty, and he depends upon things without for his felicity ; and so is well but during the pleasure of his enemy, or a thief, or a tyrant, or it may be of a dog or a wild bull.

A PRAYER FOR A CONTENTED SPIRIT.

O ALMIGHTY God, Father and Lord of all the creatures, who hast disposed all things and all chances so as may best glorify thy wisdom, and serve the ends of thy justice, and magnify thy mercy, by secret and indiscernible ways bringing good out of evil ; I most humbly beseech thee to give me wisdom from above, that I may adore thee, and admire thy ways, and footsteps, which are in the great deep and not to be searched out : teach me to submit to thy providence in all things, to be content in all changes of person and condition, to be temperate in prosperity, and to read my duty in the lines of thy mercy ; and, in adversity, to be meek, patient, and resigned ; and to look through the cloud, that I may wait for the consolation of the Lord, and the day of redemption ; in the mean time doing my duty with an unwearied diligence, and undisturbed resolution, having no fondness for the vanities or possessions of this world ; but laying up my hopes in heaven and the rewards of holy living, and being strengthened with the spirit of the inner man, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OF FAITH.

THE acts and offices of faith are, 1. To believe every thing which God hath revealed to us : and, when once we are convinced, that God hath spoken it, to make no further inquiry, but humbly to submit ; ever remembering, that there are some things, which our understanding cannot fathom, nor search out their depth.

2. To believe nothing concerning God, but what is honourable and excellent, as knowing that belief to be no honouring of God, which entertains of him any dishonourable thoughts. Our faith concerning God must be, as himself hath revealed and described his own excellences : and, in our discourses, we must remove from him all imperfection, and attribute to him all excellency.

3. To give ourselves wholly up to Christ, in heart and desire, to become disciples of his doctrine with choice (besides conviction), being in the presence of God but as idiots, that is, without any principles of our own to hinder the truth of God ; but sucking in greedily all that God hath taught us, believing it infinitely, and loving to believe it. For this is an act of love, reflected upon faith ; or an act of faith, leaning upon love.

4. To believe all God's promises, and that whatsoever is promised in Scripture, shall, on God's part, be as surely performed, as if we had it in possession. This act make us to rely upon God with the same confidence, as we did on our parents, when we were children, when we made no doubt, but whatsoever we needed, we should have it, if it were in their power.

5. To believe also the conditions of the promise, or that part of the revelation which concerns our duty. Many are apt to believe the article of remission of sins, but they believe it without the condition of repentance, or the fruits of holy life : and that is to believe the article otherwise than God intended it. For the covenant of the gospel is the great object of faith, and that supposes our duty to answer his grace ; that God will be our God, so long as we are his people. The other is not faith, but flattery.

6. To profess publicly the doctrine of Jesus Christ, openly owning whatsoever he hath revealed and commanded, not being ashamed of the word of God, or of any practices enjoined by it ; and this, without complying with any man's interest, not regarding favour, nor being moved with good words, not fearing disgrace, or loss, or inconvenience, or death itself.

7. To pray without doubting, without weariness, without faintness, entertaining no jealousies or suspicions of God, but being confident of God's hearing us, and of his returns to us, whatsoever the manner of the instance be, that, if we do our duty, it will be gracious and merciful.

These acts of faith are, in several degrees, in the servants of Jesus ; some have it but as a grain of mustard-seed ; some grow up to a plant ; some have the fulness of faith : but the least faith that is, must be a persuasion so strong, as to make us undertake the doing of all that duty, which Christ built upon the foundation of believing. But we shall best discern the truth of our faith by these following signs. St Jerome reckons three.

1. An earnest and vehement prayer : for it is impossible, we should heartily believe the things of God and the glories of the gospel, and not most importunately desire them. For every thing is desired according to our belief of its excellency and possibility.

2. To do nothing for vain-glory, but wholly for the interests of religion, and these articles we believe; valuing not at all the rumours of men, but the praise of God, to whom, by faith, we have given up all our intellectual faculties.

3. To be content with God for our judge, for our patron, for our Lord, for our friend; desiring God to be all in all to us, as we are, in our understanding and affections, wholly his.

Add to these; 4. To be a stranger upon earth in our affections, and to have all our thoughts and principal desires fixed upon the matters of faith, the things of heaven. For, if a man were adopted heir to Cæsar, he would (if he believed it real and effective) despise the present, and wholly be at court in his father's eye; and his desires would outrun his swiftest speed, and all his thoughts would spend themselves in creating ideas and little fantastic images of his future condition. Now God hath made us heirs of his kingdom, and co-heirs with Jesus: if we believed this, we would think, and affect, and study accordingly. But he, that rejoices in gain, and his heart dwells in the world, and is espoused to a fair estate, and transported with a light momentary joy, and is afflicted with losses, and amazed with temporal persecutions, and esteems disgrace or poverty in a good cause to be intolerable; this man either hath no inheritance in heaven, or believes none; and believes not that he is adopted to be the son of God, the heir of eternal glory.

5. St James's sign is the best: "Show me thy faith by thy works." Faith makes the merchant diligent and venturous, and that makes him rich. Ferdinando of Arragon believed the story told him by Columbus, and therefore he furnished him with ships, and got the West Indies by his faith in the undertaker. But Henry the Seventh of England, believed him not; and therefore trusted him not with shipping, and lost all the purchase of that faith. It is told us by Christ, "He that forgives, shall be forgiven;" if we believe this, it is certain we shall forgive our enemies; for none of us all but need and desire to be forgiven. No man can possibly despise, or refuse to desire, such excellent glories, as are revealed to them, that are servants of Christ, and yet we do nothing, that is commanded us as a condition to obtain them. No man could work a day's labour without faith: but because he believes he shall have his wages at the day's or week's end, he does his duty. But he only believes, who does that thing which other men in the like cases do, when they do believe. He that believes money gotten with danger, is better than poverty with safety, will venture for it in unknown lands or seas: and so will he that believes it better to get heaven with labour, than to go to hell with pleasure.

6. He that believes, does not make haste, but waits patiently till the times of refreshment come, and dares trust God for the morrow, and is no more solicitous for the next year, than he is for that which is past: and it is certain, that man wants faith, who dares be more confident of being supplied, when he hath money in his purse, than when he hath it only in bills of exchange from God; or that relies more upon his own industry than upon God's providence, when his own industry fails him. If you dare trust to God, when the case, to human reason, seems impossible, and trust to God then also out of choice, not because you have nothing else to trust to, but because he is the only support of a just confidence, then you give a good testimony of your faith.

7. True faith is confident, and will venture all the world upon the strength of its persuasion. Will you lay your life on it, your estate, your reputation, that the doctrine of Jesus Christ is true in every article? Then you have true faith. But he that fears men more than God, believes men more than he believes in God.

8. Faith, if it be true, living, and justifying, cannot be separated from a good life: it works miracles, makes a drunkard become sober, a lascivious person become chaste, a covetous man become liberal; "it overcomes the world—it works righteousness,"* and makes us diligently to do, and cheerfully to suffer, whatsoever God hath placed in our way to heaven.

The means and instruments to obtain faith are, 1. A humble, willing, and docile mind, or desire to be instructed in the way of God: for persuasion enters like a sunbeam, gently, and without violence: and open but the window, and draw the curtain, and the Sun of Righteousness will enlighten your darkness.

2. Remove all prejudice and love to every thing, which may be contradicted by faith. "How can ye believe (said Christ,) that receive praise one of another?" An unchaste man cannot easily be brought to believe, that, without purity, he shall never see God. He that loves riches, can hardly believe the doctrine of poverty and renunciation of the world: and alms and martyrdom and the doctrine of the cross, are folly to him that loves his ease and pleasures. He that hath within him any principle contrary to the doctrines of faith, cannot easily become a disciple.

3. Prayer, which is instrumental to every thing, hath a particular promise in this thing. "He that lacks wisdom, let him ask it of God:" and, "If you give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?"

4. The consideration of the Divine omnipotence and infinite wisdom, and our own ignorance, are great instruments of curing all doubting, and silencing the murmurs of infidelity.

5. Avoid all curiosity of inquiry into particulars, and circumstances, and mysteries: for true faith is full of ingenuity and hearty simplicity, free from suspicion, wise and confident, trusting upon generals, without watching and prying into unnecessary or indiscernible particulars. No man carries his bed into his field, to watch how his corn grows, but believes in the general order of providence and nature; and, at harvest, finds himself not deceived.

6. In time of temptation, be not busy to dispute, but rely upon the conclusion, and throw yourself upon God; and contend not with him but in prayer, and in the presence, and with the help, of a prudent untempted guide: and be sure to esteem all changes of belief, which offer themselves in the time of your greatest weakness (contrary to the persuasions of your best understanding) to be temptations, and reject them accordingly.

7. It is a prudent course, that in our health and best advantages, we lay up particular arguments and instruments of persuasion and confidence, to be brought forth and used in the great day of expense; and that especially in such things in which we used to be most tempted, and in which we are least confident, and which are most necessary, and which commonly the devil uses to assault us withal, in the days of our visitation.

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Rom. viii. 10.

OF CHARITY, OR THE LOVE OF GOD.

LOVE is the greatest thing that God can give us ; for himself is love : and it is the greatest thing we can give to God ; for it will also give ourselves, and carry with it all that is ours. The apostle calls it the band of perfection ; it is the old, and it is the new, and it is the great commandment, and it is all the commandments ; for it is the fulfilling of the law. It does the work of all other graces, without any instrument but its own immediate virtue. For as the love to sin makes a man sin against all his own reason, and all the discourses of wisdom, and all the advices of his friends, and without temptation, and without opportunity ; so does the love of God : it makes a man chaste without the laborious arts of fasting and exterior disciplines, temperate in the midst of feasts, and is active enough to choose it without any intermedial appetites, and reaches at glory through the very heart of grace, without any other arms but those of love. It is a grace that loves God for himself ; and our neighbours, for God. The consideration of God's goodness and bounty, the experience of those profitable and excellent emanations from him, may be, and, most commonly, are, the first motive of our love ; but when we are once entered, and have tasted the goodness of God, we love the spring for its own excellency, passing from passion to reason, from thanking to adoring, from sense to spirit, from considering ourselves to a union with God : and this is the image and little representation of heaven ; it is beatitude in picture, or rather the infancy and beginnings of glory.

We need no incentives by way of special enumeration to move us to the love of God ; for we cannot love any thing for any reason real or imaginary, but that excellence is infinitely more eminent in God. There can but two things create love, perfection and usefulness : to which answer on our part 1. Admiration ; and, 2. Desire ; and both these are centered in love. For the entertainment of the first, there is in God an infinite nature, immensity or vastness without extension or limit, immutability, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, dominion, providence, bounty, mercy, justice, perfection in himself, and the end, to which all things and all actions must be directed, and will at last arrive. The consideration of which may be heightened, if we consider our distance from all these glories : our smallness and limited nature, our nothing, our inconstancy, our age like a span, our weakness and ignorance, our poverty, our inadvertency and inconsideration, our disabilities and disaffections to do good, our harsh natures and unmerciful inclinations, our universal iniquity, and our necessities and dependencies, not only on God originally and essentially, but even our need of the meanest of God's creatures, and our being obnoxious to the weakest and most contemptible. But, for the entertainment of the second, we may consider, that in him is a torrent of pleasure for the voluptuous ; he is the fountain of honour for the ambitious ; and inexhaustible treasure for the covetous. Our vices are in love with fantastic pleasures and images of perfection, which are truly and really to be found nowhere but in God. And therefore our virtues have such proper objects, that it is but reasonable they should all turn into love ; for certain it is, that this love will turn all virtue. For in the scrutinies for righteousness and judgment, when it

is inquired into whether such a person be a good man or no, the meaning is not, What does he believe? or what does he hope? but what he loves.

THE ACTS OF LOVE TO GOD ARE,

1. LOVE does all things which may please the beloved person; it performs all his commandments: and this is one of the greatest instances and arguments of our love that God requires of us,—this is love, “That we keep his commandments.” Love is obedient.

2. It does all the intimations and secret significations of his pleasure, whom we love; and this is an argument of a great degree of it. The first instance is, it makes the love accepted; but this gives a greatness and singularity to it. The first is the least, and less than it cannot do our duty; but, without this second, we cannot come to perfection. Great love is also pliant and inquisitive in the instances of its expression.

3. Love gives away all things, that so he may advance the interest of the beloved person: it relieves all that he would have relieved, and spends itself in such real significations, as it is enabled withal. He never loved God, that will quit any thing of his religion to save his money. Love is always liberal and communicative.

4. It suffers all things that are imposed by its beloved, or that can happen for his sake; or that intervene in his service, cheerfully, sweetly, willingly; expecting that God should turn them into good, and instruments of felicity. “Charity hopeth all things, endureth all things.”* Love is patient and content with any thing, so it be together with its beloved.

5. Love is also impatient of any thing that may displease the beloved person; hating all sin as the enemy of its friend; for love contracts all the same relations, and marries the same friendships and the same hatreds; and all affection to a sin is perfectly inconsistent with the love of God. Love is not divided between God and God’s enemy; we must love God with all our heart; that is, give him a whole and undivided affection, having love for nothing else, but such things which he allows, and which he commands, or loves himself.

6. Love endeavours for ever to be present, to converse with, to enjoy, to be united with its object; loves to be talking of him, reciting his praises, telling his stories, repeating his words, imitating his gestures, transcribing his copy in every thing; and every degree of union and every degree of likeness is a degree of love; and it can endure any thing but the displeasure and the absence of its beloved. For we are not to use God and religion, as men use perfumes, with which they are delighted when they have them, but can very well be without them. True charity is restless, till it enjoys God in such instances in which it wants him: it is like hunger and thirst, it must be fed, or it cannot be answered: and nothing can supply the presence, or make recompense for the absence of God, or of the effects of his favour and the light of his countenance.

7. True love in all accidents looks upon the beloved person, and observes his countenance, and how he approves or disapproves, and accordingly, looks sad or cheerful. He that loves God, is not displeased at those accidents,

* 1 Cor. xiii.

which God chooses ; nor murmurs at those changes, which he makes in his family ; nor envies at those gifts he bestows ; but chooses as he likes, and is ruled by his judgment, and is perfectly of his persuasion ; loving to learn where God is the teacher, and being content to be ignorant or silent, where he is not pleased to open himself.

8. Love is curious of little things, of circumstances and measures, and little accidents ; not allowing to itself any infirmity, which it strives not to master, aiming at what it cannot yet reach, desiring to be of an angelical purity, and of a perfect innocence, and a seraphical fervour, and fears every image of offence ; is as much afflicted at an idle word, as some at an act of adultery, and will not allow to itself so much anger, as will disturb a child, nor endure the impurity of a dream. And this is the curiosity and niceness of divine love : this is the fear of God, and is the daughter and production of love.

THE MEASURES AND RULES OF DIVINE LOVE.

BUT because this passion is pure as the brightest and smoothest mirror, and, therefore, is apt to be sullied with every impurer breath, we must be careful, that our love to God be governed by these measures.

1. That our love to God be sweet, even, and full of tranquillity : having in it no violences or transportations, but going on in a course of holy actions and duties, which are proportionable to our condition and present state ; not to satisfy all the desire, but all the probabilities and measures of our strength. A new beginner in religion hath passionate and violent desires ; but they must not be the measure of his actions : but he must consider his strength, his late sickness and state of death, the proper temptations of his condition, and stand at first upon his defence ; not go to storm a strong fort, or attack a potent enemy, or do heroical actions, and fitter for giants in religion. Indiscreet violences and untimely forwardness are the rocks of religion, against which tender spirits often suffer shipwreck.

2. Let our love be prudent and without illusion : that is, that it express itself in such instances, which God hath chosen, or which we choose ourselves by proportion to his rules and measures. Love turns into doating, when religion turns into superstition. No degree of love can be imprudent, but the expressions may : we cannot love God too much, but we may proclaim it in indecent manners.

3. Let our love be firm, constant, and inseparable ; not coming and returning like the tide, but descending like a never-failing river, ever running into the ocean of Divine excellency, passing on in the channels of duty and a constant obedience, and never ceasing to be what it is, till it comes to be what it desires to be : still being a river, till it be turned into sea and vastness, even the immensity of a blessed eternity.

Although the consideration of the divine excellences and mercies be infinitely sufficient to produce in us love to God (who is invisible, and yet not distant from us, but we feel him in his blessings, he dwells in our hearts by faith, we feed on him in the sacrament, and are made all one with him in the incarnation and glorification of Jesus ;) yet, that we may the better enkindle and increase our love to God, the following advices are not useless.

HELPS TO INCREASE OUR LOVE TO GOD, BY WAY OF EXERCISE.

1. Cut off all earthly and sensual loves ; for they pollute and unhallow the pure and spiritual love. Every degree of inordinate affection to the things of this world, and every act of love to a sin, is a perfect enemy to the love of God : and it is a great shame to take any part of our affection from the eternal God, to bestow it upon his creature in defiance of the Creator ; or to give it to the devil, our open enemy, in disparagement of him who is the fountain of all excellences and celestial amities.

2. Lay fetters and restraints upon the imaginative and fantastic part ; because our fancy, being an imperfect and higher faculty, is usually pleased with the entertainment of shadows and gauds : and, because the things of the world fill it with such beauties and fantastic imagery, the fancy presents such objects, as are amiable to the affections and elective powers. Persons of fancy, such as are women and children, have always the most violent loves : but, therefore, if we be careful with what representations we fill our fancy, we may the sooner rectify our love. To this purpose it is good, that we transplant the instruments of fancy into religion : and for this reason music was brought into churches, and ornaments, and perfumes, and comely garments, and solemnities, and decent ceremonies, that the busy and less discerning fancy, being bribed with its proper objects, may be instrumental to a more celestial and spiritual love.

3. Remove solicitude or worldly cares, and multitudes of secular businesses : for, if these take up the intention and actual application of our thoughts and our employments, they will also possess our passions ; which, if they be filled with one object, though ignoble, cannot attend another, though more excellent. We always contract a friendship and relation with those with whom we converse : our very country is dear to us, for our being in it ; and the neighbours of the same village, and those that buy and sell with us, have seized upon some portions of our love ; and, therefore, if we dwell in the affairs of the world, we shall also grow in love with them ; and all our love or all our hatred, all our hopes or all our fears, which the eternal God would willingly secure to himself, and esteem amongst his treasures and precious things, shall be spent upon trifles and vanities.

4. Do not only choose the things of God, but secure your inclinations and aptnesses for God and for religion. For it will be a hard thing for a man to do such a personal violence to his first desires, as to choose whatsoever he hath no mind to. A man will many times satisfy the importunity and daily solicitations of his first longings ; and, therefore, there is nothing can secure our loves to God, but stopping the natural fountains, and making religion to grow near the first desires of the soul.

5. Converse with God, by frequent prayer. In particular, desire that your desires may be right, and love to have your affections regular and holy. To which purpose make very frequent addresses to God by ejaculations and communions, and an assiduous daily devotion ; discover to him all your wants ; complain to him of all your affronts ; do, as Hezekiah did, lay your misfortunes and your ill news before him, spread them before the Lord ; call to him for health, run to him for counsel, beg of him for pardon ; and it is as natural to love him to whom we make such addresses, and of whom we have such dependences, as it is for children to love their parents.

6. Consider the immensity and vastness of the divine love to us, expressed in all the emanations of his providence ; 1. In his creation ; 2. In his conservation of us. For it is not my prince, or my patron, or my friend, that supports me, or relieves my needs ; but God who made the corn that my friend sends me ; who created the grapes, and supported him, who hath as many dependencies, and as many natural necessities, and as perfect disabilities as myself. God, indeed, made him the instrument of his providence to me, as he hath made his own land or his own cattle to him : with this only difference, that God, by his ministration to me, intends to do him a favour and a reward, which to natural instruments he does not. 3. In giving his Son ; 4. In forgiving our sins ; 5. In adopting us to glory ; and ten thousand times ten thousand little accidents and instances, happening in the doing every one of these : and it is not possible but, for so great love, we should give love again ; for God, we should give man ; for felicity, we should part with our misery. In the use of these instruments, love will grow in several knots and steps, like the sugar-canes of India, according to a thousand varieties in the persons loving ; and it will be great or less, in several persons, and in the same, according to his growth in Christianity.

OF READING OR HEARING THE WORD OF GOD.

READING and hearing the word of God are but the several circumstances of the same duty ; instrumental especially to faith, but consequently, to all other graces of the Spirit. It is all one to us, whether by the eye or by the ear, the Spirit conveys his precepts to us. If we hear St Paul saying to us, that “ whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,” or read it in one of his epistles ; in either of them, we are equally and sufficiently instructed. The Scriptures read are the same thing to us, which the same doctrine was, when it was preached by the disciples of our blessed Lord ; and we are to learn of either with the same dispositions. There are many that cannot read the word, and they must take it in by the ear ; and they that can read, find the same word of God by the eye. It is necessary, that all men learn it in some way or other, and it is sufficient, in order to their practice that they learn it any way. The word of God is all those commandments and revelations, those promises and threatenings, the stories and sermons recorded in the Bible : nothing else is the word of God, that we know of by any certain instrument. The good books and spiritual discourses, the sermons or homilies written or spoken by men, are but the word of men, or rather explications of, and exhortations according to the word of God ; but, of themselves, they are not the word of God. In a sermon, the text only is in a proper sense to be called God’s word : and yet good sermons are of great use and convenience for the advantages of religion. He that preaches an hour together against drunkenness with the tongue of men or angels, hath spoke no other word of God but this, “ Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess :” and he that writes that sermon in a book, and publishes that book, hath preached to all that read

it, a louder sermon, than could be spoken in a church. This I say to this purpose, that we may separate truth from error, popular opinions from substantial truths. For God preaches to us in the Scripture, and by his secret assistances and spiritual thoughts and holy motions : good men preach to us, when they, by popular arguments, and human arts and compliances, expound and press any of those doctrines, which God hath preached unto us in his holy word. But,

1. The Holy Ghost is certainly the best preacher in the world, and the words of Scripture the best sermons.

2. All the doctrine of salvation is plainly set down there, that the most unlearned person, by hearing it read, may understand all his duty. What can be plainer spoken than this, "Thou shalt not kill. Be not drunk with wine. Husbands love your wives. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them." The wit of man cannot more plainly tell us our duty, or more fully, than the Holy Ghost hath done already.

3. Good sermons and good books are of excellent use : but yet they can serve no other end, but that we practise the plain doctrines of Scripture.

4. What Abraham, in the parable, said concerning the brethren of the rich man is here very proper ; "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them : but if they refuse to hear these, neither will they believe though one should arise from the dead to preach unto them."*

5. Reading the Holy Scriptures is a duty expressly commanded us,† and is called in Scripture, "preaching : " all other preaching is the effect of human skill and industry, and although of great benefit, yet it is but an ecclesiastical ordinance ; the law of God concerning preaching being expressed in the matter of reading the Scriptures, and hearing that word of God which is, and as it is, there described.

But this duty is reduced to practice in the following rules.

RULES FOR HEARING OR READING THE WORD OF GOD.

1. SET apart some portion of thy time, according to the opportunities of thy calling and necessary employment, for the reading of Holy Scripture ; and, if it be possible, every day, read or hear some of it read : you are sure that book teaches all truth, commands all holiness, and promises all happiness.

2. When the word of God is read or preached to you, be sure you be of a ready heart and mind, free from worldly cares and thoughts, diligent to hear, careful to mark, studious to remember, and desirous to practise all that is commanded, and to live according to it : do not hear for any other end, but to become better in your life, and to be instructed in every good work, and to increase in the love and service of God.

3. Beg of God, by prayer, that he would give you the spirit of obedience and profit, and that he would, by his Spirit, write the word in your heart, and that you describe it in your life. To which purpose serve yourself of some affectionate ejaculations to that purpose, before and after this duty.

4. Let not a prejudice to any man's person hinder thee from receiving

* Luke xvi. 29, 31.

† Deut. xxxi. 13. Luke xxiv. 45. Matt. xxii. 29. Acts xv. 21. Rev. 1. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

good by his doctrine, if it be according to godliness ; but (if occasion offer it, or especially if duty present it to thee, that is, if it be preached in that assembly, where thou art bound to be present) accept the word preached as a message from God, and the minister, as his angel in that ministration.

5. Consider and remark the doctrine that is represented to thee in any discourse ; and if the preacher adds accidental advantages, any thing to comply with thy weakness, or to put thy spirit into action or holy resolution, remember it, and make use of it. But if the preacher be a weak person, yet the text is the doctrine, thou art to remember, that contains all thy duty ; it is worth thy attendance to hear that spoken often, and renewed upon thy thoughts : and though thou beest a learned man, yet the same thing which thou knowest already, if spoken by another, may be made active by that application. I can better be comforted by my own considerations, if another hand applies them, than if I do it myself ; because the word of God does not work as a natural agent, but as a divine instrument : it does not prevail by the force of deduction and artificial discoursings only, but chiefly by way of blessing in the ordinance, and in the ministry of an appointed person. At least, obey the public order, and reverence the constitution, and give good example of humility, charity, and obedience.

6. When Scriptures are read, you are only to inquire, with diligence and modesty, into the meaning of the Spirit : but if homilies or sermons be made upon the words of Scripture, you are to consider, whether all that be spoken be conformable to the Scriptures. For, although you may practise for human reasons, and human arguments, ministered from the preacher's art ; yet you must practise nothing but the command of God, nothing but the doctrine of Scripture, that is, the text.

7. Use the advice of some spiritual or other prudent man, for the choice of such spiritual books, which may be of use and benefit for the edification of thy spirit in the ways of holy living ; and esteem that time well accounted for that is prudently and affectionately employed, in hearing or reading good books and pious discourses ; ever remembering, that God, by hearing us speak to him in prayer, obliges us to hear him speak to us in his word, by what instrument soever it be conveyed.

AGAINST ENVY.

AGAINST envy I shall use the same argument, I would use to persuade a man from the fever or the dropsy. 1. Because it is a disease ; it is so far from having pleasure in it, or a temptation to it, that it is full of pain, a great instrument of vexation : it eats the flesh, and dries up the marrow, and makes hollow eyes and lean cheeks, and a pale face. 2. It is nothing but a direct resolution never to enter into heaven by the way of noble pleasure, taken in the good of others. 3. It is most contrary to God. 4. And a just contrary state to the felicities and actions of heaven, where every star increases the light of the other, and the multitude of guests, at the supper of the Lamb, makes the eternal meal more festival. 5. It is perfectly

the state of hell, and the passion of devils : for they do nothing but despair in themselves, and envy others' quiet or safety, and yet cannot rejoice either in their good or in their evil, although they endeavour to hinder that, and procure this, with all the devices and arts of malice and of a great understanding. 6. Envy can serve no end in the world ; it cannot please any thing, nor do any thing, nor hinder any thing, but the content and felicity of him that hath it. 7. Envy can never pretend to justice, as hatred and uncharitableness sometimes may : for there may be causes of hatred ; and I may have wrong done me ; and then hatred hath some pretence, though no just argument. But no man is unjust or injurious, for being prosperous or wise. 8. And therefore many men profess to hate another, but no man owns envy, as being an enmity and displeasure for no cause, but goodness or felicity : envious men, being like cantharides and caterpillars, that delight most to devour ripe and most excellent fruits. It is of all crimes the basest : for malice and anger are appeased with benefits, but envy is exasperated, as envying to fortunate persons both their power and their will to do good ; and never leaves murmurings, till the envied person be levelled, and then only the vulture leaves to eat the liver. For if his neighbour be made miserable, the envious man is apt to be troubled : like him, that is so long unbuilding the turrets, till all the roof is low or flat, or that the stones fall upon the lower buildings, and do a mischief, that the man repents of.

AGAINST ANGER.

1. CONSIDER that anger is a professed enemy to counsel ; it is a direct storm, in which no man can be heard to speak or call from without : for if you counsel gently, you are despised : if you urge it, and be vehement, you provoke it more. Be careful, therefore, to lay up beforehand a great stock of reason and prudent consideration, that, like a besieged town, you may be provided for, and be defensible from within, since you are not likely to be relieved from without. Anger is not to be suppressed but by something that is as inward as itself, and more habitual. To which purpose add, that, 2. Of all passions, it endeavours most to make reason useless. 3. That it is a universal passion, of an infinite object : for no man was ever so amorous, as to love a toad ; none so envious, as to repine at the condition of the miserable ; no man so timorous, as to fear a dead bee ; but anger is troubled at every thing, and every man, and every accident : and, therefore, unless it be suppressed, it will make a man's condition restless. 4. If it proceeds from a great cause, it turns to fury ; if from a small cause, it is peevishness : and so is always either terrible or ridiculous. 5. It makes a man's body monstrous, deformed, and contemptible ; the voice horrid ; the eyes cruel ; the face pale or fiery ; the gait fierce ; the speech clamorous and loud. 6. It is neither manly nor ingenuous. 7. It proceeds from softness of spirit, and pusillanimity ; which makes, that women are more angry than men, sick persons more than the healthful, old men more than young, unprosperous and calamitous people than the blessed and fortunate.

8. It is a passion fitter for flies and insects, than for persons professing nobleness and bounty. 9. It is troublesome not only to those that suffer it, but to them that behold it ; there being no greater incivility of entertainment, than for the cook's fault or the negligence of the servants, to be cruel, or outrageous, or unpleasant in the presence of the guests. 10. It makes marriage to be a necessary and unavoidable trouble ; friendships, and societies, and familiarities, to be intolerable. 11. It multiplies the evils of drunkenness, and makes the levities of wine to run into madness. 12. It makes innocent jesting to be the beginning of tragedies. 13. It turns friendship into hatred ; it makes a man lose himself, and his reason, and his argument, in disputation. It turns the desires of knowledge into an itch of wrangling. It adds insolency to power. It turns justice into cruelty, and judgment into oppression. It changes discipline into tediousness and hatred of liberal institution. It makes a prosperous man to be envied, and the unfortunate to be unpitied. It is a confluence of all the irregular passions : there is in it envy and sorrow, fear and scorn, pride and prejudice, rashness and inconsideration, rejoicing in evil, and a desire to inflict it, self-love, impatience, and curiosity. And lastly, though it be very troublesome to others, yet it is most troublesome to him that hath it.

In the use of these arguments, be diligent to observe, lest, in your desires to suppress anger, you be passionate and angry at yourself for being angry ; like physicians, who give a bitter potion when they intend to eject the bitterness of choler ; for this will provoke the person, and increase the passion. But placidly and quietly set upon the mortification of it ; and attempt it first for a day, resolving that day not at all to be angry, and to be watchful and observant ; for a day is no great trouble : but then, after one day's watchfulness, it will be as easy to watch two days, as at first it was to watch one day ; and so you may increase, till it becomes easy and habitual.

Only observe, that such an anger alone is criminal, which is against charity to myself or my neighbour ; but anger against sin is a holy zeal, and an effect of love to God and my brother, for whose interest I am passionate like a concerned person : and if I take care, that my anger makes no reflection of scorn or cruelty upon the offender, or of pride and violence, or transportation to myself, anger becomes charity and duty. And when one commended Charilaus, the king of Sparta, for a gentle, a good, and a meek prince, his colleague said well, "How can he be good who is not an enemy even to vicious persons?"

PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE celebration of the holy sacrament is the great mysteriousness of the Christian religion, and succeeds to the most solemn rite of natural and Judaical religion, the law of sacrificing. For God spared mankind, and took the sacrifice of beasts together with our solemn prayers for an instrument of expiation. But these could not purify the soul from sin, but were typical of the sacrifice of something that could. But nothing could do this

but either the offering of all that sinned, that every man should be the *anathema* or *devoted thing*; or else by some one of the same capacity, who by some superadded excellency might in his own personal sufferings have a value great enough to satisfy for all the whole kind of sinning persons. This the Son of God, Jesus Christ, God and man, undertook, and finished by a sacrifice of himself upon the altar of the cross.

2. This sacrifice, because it was perfect, could be but one, and that once; but because the needs of the world should last as long as the world itself, it was necessary, that there should be a perpetual ministry established, whereby this one sufficient sacrifice should be made eternally effectual to the several new arising needs of all the world, who should desire it, or in any sense be capable of it.

3. To this end Christ was made a priest for ever: he was initiated or consecrated on the cross, and there began his priesthood, which was to last till his coming to judgment. It began on earth, but was to last and be officiated in heaven, where he sits perpetually representing and exhibiting to the Father that great effective sacrifice, which he offered on the cross, to eternal and never-failing purposes.

4. As Christ is pleased to represent to his Father that great sacrifice as a means of atonement and expiation for all mankind, and with special purposes and intendment for all the elect, all that serve him in holiness: so he hath appointed, that the same ministry shall be done upon earth too, in our manner, and according to our proportion; and therefore hath constituted and separated an order of men, who, by "showing forth the Lord's death" by sacramental representation, may pray unto God after the same manner that our Lord and high-priest does; that is, offer to God and represent in this solemn prayer and sacrament, Christ as already offered; so sending up a gracious instrument, whereby our prayers may, for his sake and in the same manner of intercession, be offered up to God in our behalf, and for all them for whom we pray, to all those purposes for which Christ died.

5. As the ministers of the sacrament do, in a sacramental manner, present to God the sacrifice of the cross, by being imitators of Christ's intercession; so the people are sacrificers too in their manner: for besides that, by saying *Amen*, they join in the act of him that ministers, and make it also to be their own; so, when they eat and drink the consecrated and blessed elements worthily, they receive Christ within them, and therefore may also offer him to God, while, in their sacrifice of obedience and thanksgiving, they present themselves to God with Christ, whom they have spiritually received, that is, themselves with that which will make them gracious and acceptable. The offering their bodies and souls and services to God in him, and by him, and with him, who is his Father's well-beloved, and in whom he is well pleased, cannot but be accepted to all the purposes of blessing, grace, and glory.

6. This is the sum of the greatest mystery of our religion; it is the copy of the passion, and the ministration of the great mystery of our redemption: and, therefore, whatsoever entitles us to the general privileges of Christ's passion, is all that is necessary by way of disposition to the celebration of the sacrament of his passion; because this celebration is our manner of applying or using it. The particulars of which preparation are represented in the following rules.

1. No man must dare to approach to the holy sacrament of the Lord's

supper if he be in a state of any one sin, that is, unless he have entered into the state of repentance, that is, of sorrow and amendment; lest it be said concerning him, as it was concerning Judas, the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table: and he that receiveth Christ into an impure soul or body, first turns his most excellent nourishment into poison, and then feeds upon it.

2. Every communicant must first have examined himself, that is, tried the condition and state of his soul, searched out the secret ulcers, inquired out its weaknesses and indiscretions, and all those aptnesses, where it is exposed to temptation; that, by finding out its diseases, he may find a cure, and by discovering its aptnesses he may secure his present purposes of future amendment, and may be armed against dangers and temptations.

3. This examination must be a man's own act and inquisition into his life: but then also it should lead a man on to run to those, whom the great Physician of our souls, Christ Jesus, hath appointed to minister physic to our diseases; that, in all dangers and great accidents, we may be assisted for comfort and remedy, for medicine and caution.

4. In this affair let no man deceive himself, and against such a time which public authority hath appointed for us to receive the sacrament, weep for his sins by way of solemnity and ceremony, and still retain the affection: but he that comes to this feast, must have on the wedding-garment, that is, he must have put on Jesus Christ, and he must have put off the old man with his affections and lusts; and he must be wholly conformed to Christ in the image of his mind. For then we have put on Christ, when our souls are clothed with his righteousness, when every faculty of our soul is proportioned and vested according to the pattern of Christ's life. And therefore a man must not leap from his last night's surfeit and bath, and then communicate: but when he hath begun the work of God effectually, and made some progress in repentance, and hath walked some stages and periods in the ways of godliness, then let him come to him that is to minister it, and having made known the state of his soul, he is to be admitted: but to receive it into an unhallowed soul and body, is to receive the dust of the tabernacle into the waters of jealousy; it will make the belly to swell, and the thigh to rot; it will not convey Christ to us, but the devil will enter and dwell there, till with it he returns to his dwelling of torment. Remember always, that after a great sin or after a habit of sins, a man is not soon made clean; and no unclean thing must come to this feast. It is not the preparation of two or three days, that can render a person capable of this banquet: for, in this feast, all Christ, and Christ's passion, and all his graces, the blessings and effects of his sufferings, are conveyed. Nothing can fit us for this, but what can unite us to Christ, and obtain of him to present our needs to his heavenly Father: this sacrament can no otherwise be celebrated but upon the same terms on which we may hope for pardon and heaven itself,

5. When we have this general and indispensably-necessary preparation, we are to make our souls more adorned and trimmed up with circumstances of pious actions and special devotions, setting apart some portion of our time immediately before the day of solemnity, according as our great occasions will permit: and this time is specially to be spent in actions of repentance, confession of our sins, renewing our purposes of holy living, praying for pardon of our failings, and for those graces, which may prevent the

like sadnesses for the time to come, meditation upon the passion, upon the infinite love of God expressed in so great mysterious manners of redemption : and indefinitely in all acts of virtue, which may build our souls up into a temple fit for the reception of Christ himself and the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit.

6. The celebration of the holy sacrament being the most solemn prayer, joined with the most effectual instrument of its acceptance, must suppose us in the love of God and in charity with all the world : and therefore we must, before every communion especially, remember what differences or jealousies are between us and any one else, and recompose all disunions, and cause right understandings between each other ; offering to satisfy whom we have injured, and to forgive them who have injured us, without thoughts of resuming the quarrel, when the solemnity is over ; for that is but to rake the embers in light and fantastic ashes : it must be quenched, and a holy flame enkindled : no fires must be at all, but the fires of love and zeal : and the altar of incense will send up a sweet perfume, and make atonement for us.

7. When the day of the feast is come, lay aside all cares and impertinences of the world, and remember that this is thy soul's day, a day of traffic and intercourse with heaven. Arise early in the morning. 1. Give God thanks for the approach of so great a blessing. 2. Confess thine own unworthiness to admit so Divine a guest. 3. Then remember and deplore thy sins, which have made thee so unworthy. 4. Then confess God's goodness, and take sanctuary there, and upon him place thy hopes ; 5. And invite him to thee with renewed acts of love, of holy desire, of hatred of his enemy, sin. 6. Make oblation of thyself wholly to be disposed by him, to the obedience of him, to his providence and possession, and pray him to enter and dwell there for ever. And after this, with joy and holy fear, and the forwardness of love, address thyself to the receiving of him, to whom, and by whom, and for whom, all faith and all hope, and all love, in the whole catholic church, both in heaven and earth, is designed ; him whom kings and queens, and whole kingdoms are in love with, and count it the greatest honour in the world, that their crowns and sceptres are laid at his holy feet.

8. When the holy man stands at the table of blessing, and ministers the rite of consecration, then do as the angels do, who behold, and love, and wonder that the Son of God should become food to the souls of his servants ; that he, who cannot suffer any change or lessening, should be broken into pieces, and enter into the body to support and nourish the spirit, and yet at the same time remain in heaven, while he descends to thee upon earth ; that he who hath essential felicity, should become miserable and die for thee, and then give himself to thee for ever to redeem thee from sin and misery ; that by his wounds he should procure health to thee, by his affronts he should entitle thee to glory, by his death he should bring thee to life, and by becoming a man he should make thee partaker of the Divine nature. These are such glories, that although they are made so obvious, that each eye may behold them, yet they are also so deep, that no thought can fathom them : but so it hath pleased him to make these mysteries to be sensible, because the excellency and depth of the mercy is not intelligible ; that while we are ravished and comprehended within the infiniteness of so vast and mysterious a mercy, yet we may be as sure of it, as of that thing we see

and feel and smell and taste ; but yet it is so great that we cannot understand it.

9. These holy mysteries are offered to our senses, but not to be placed under our feet : they are sensible, but not common ; and therefore as the weakness of the elements adds wonder to the excellency of the sacrament, so let our reverence and venerable usages of them add honour to the elements, and acknowledge the glory of the mystery, and the divinity of the mercy. Let us receive the consecrated elements with all devotion and humility of body and spirit ; and do this honour to it, that it be the first food we eat, and the first beverage we drink that day, unless it be in case of sickness, or other great necessity ; and that your body and soul both be prepared to its reception with abstinence from secular pleasures, that you may better have attended fastings and preparatory prayers. For if ever it be seasonable to observe the counsel of St Paul, that married persons by consent should abstain for a time, that they may attend to solemn religion, it is now. It was not by St Paul nor the after-ages of the church called a duty so to do, but it is most reasonable, that the more solemn actions of religion should be attended to without the mixture of any thing, that may discompose the mind, and make it more secular or less religious.

10. In the act of receiving, exercise acts of faith with much confidence and resignation, believing it not to be common bread and wine, but holy in their use, holy in their signification, holy in their change, and holy in their effect : and believe, if thou art a worthy communicant, thou dost as verily receive Christ's body and blood to all effects and purposes of the Spirit, as thou dost receive the blessed elements into thy mouth, that thou puttest thy finger to his hand, and thy hand into his side, and thy lips to his fontinel of blood, sucking life from his heart ; and yet if thou dost communicate unworthily, thou eatest and drinkest Christ to thy danger, and death, and destruction. Dispute not concerning the secret of the mystery, and the nicety of the manner of Christ's presence ; it is sufficient to thee, that Christ shall be present to thy soul, as an instrument of grace, as a pledge of the resurrection, as the earnest of glory and immortality, and a means of many intermedial blessings, even all such as are necessary for thee, and are in order to thy salvation. And to make all this good to thee, there is nothing necessary on thy part but a holy life, and a true belief of all the sayings of Christ ; amongst which, indefinitely assent to the words of institution, and believe that Christ, in the holy sacrament, gives thee his body and his blood. He that believes not this, is not a Christian. He that believes so much, needs not to inquire further, nor to entangle his faith by disbelieving his sense.

11. Fail not this solemnity, according to the custom of pious and devout people, to make an offering to God for the uses of religion and the poor, according to thy ability. For when Christ feasts his body, let us also feast our fellow-members, who have right to the same promises, and are partakers of the same sacrament, and partners of the same hope, and cared for under the same Providence, and descended from the same common parents, and whose Father God is, and Christ is their elder brother. If thou chancest to communicate, where this holy custom is not observed publicly, supply that want by thy private charity ; but offer it to God at his holy table, at least by thy private designing it there.

12. When you have received, pray and give thanks. Pray for all

estates of men ; for they also have an interest in the body of Christ, whereof they are members : and you, in conjunction with Christ (whom then you have received), are more fit to pray for them in that advantage, and in the celebration of that holy sacrifice, which then is sacramentally represented to God. Give thanks for the passion of our dearest Lord : remember all its parts, and all the instruments of your redemption ; and beg of God, that by a holy perseverance in well-doing, you may from shadows pass on to substances, from eating his body to seeing his face, from the typical, sacramental, and transient, to the real and eternal supper of the Lamb.

13. After the solemnity is done, let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, and love, and obedience, and conformity to his life and death : as you have taken Christ into you, so put Christ on you, and conform every faculty of your soul and body to his holy image and perfection. Remember, that now Christ is all one with you ; and, therefore, when you are to do an action, consider how Christ did, or would do, the like, and do you imitate his example, and transcribe his copy, and understand all his commandments, and choose all that he propounded, and desire his promises, and fear his threatenings, and marry his loves and hatreds, and contract his friendships ; for then you do every day communicate ; especially when Christ thus dwells in you, and you in Christ, growing up towards a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

14. Do not instantly, upon your return from church, return also to the world and secular thoughts and employment ; but let the remaining parts of that day be like a post-communion, or an after-office, entertaining your blessed Lord with all the caresses and sweetness of love and colloquies, and intercourses of duty and affection, acquainting him with all your needs, and revealing to him all your secrets, and opening all your infirmities ; and as the affairs of your person or employment call you off, so retire again with often ejaculations and acts of entertainment to your beloved guest.

THE EFFECTS AND BENEFITS OF WORTHY COMMUNICATING.

WHEN I said, that the sacrifice of the cross, which Christ offered for all the sins and all the needs of the world, is represented to God by the minister in the sacrament, and offered up in prayer and sacramental memory, after the manner that Christ himself intercedes for us in heaven (so far as his glorious priesthood is imitable by his ministers on earth), I must of necessity also mean, that all the benefits of that sacrifice are then conveyed to all that communicate worthily. But if we descend to particulars, then and there the church is nourished in her faith, strengthened in her hope, enlarged in her bowels with an increasing charity ; there all the members of Christ are joined with each other, and all to Christ their head ; and we again renew the covenant with God in Jesus Christ, and God seals his part, and we promise for ours, and Christ unites both, and the Holy Ghost signs both in the collation of those graces, which we then pray for, and exercise and receive all at once. There our bodies are nourished with the signs, and our souls with the mystery : our bodies receive into them the seed of an immortal nature, and our souls are joined with him, who is the first-fruits of the resurrection, and never can die. And if we desire any thing else and need it, here it is to be prayed for, here to be hoped for, here to be received. Long life and health, and recovery from

sickness, and competent support and maintenance, and peace and deliverance from our enemies, and content, and patience, and joy, and sanctified riches, or a cheerful poverty, and liberty, and whatsoever else is a blessing, was purchased for us by Christ in his death and resurrection, and in his intercession in heaven. And this sacrament being that to our particulars, which the great mysteries are in themselves, and by design to all the world, if we receive worthily, we shall receive any of these blessings, according as God shall choose for us; and he will not only choose with more wisdom, but also with more affection, than we can for ourselves.

After all this, it is advised by the guides of souls, wise men and pious, that all persons should communicate very often, even as often as they can without excuses or delays. Every thing that puts us from so holy an employment, when we are moved to it, being either a sin or an imperfection, an infirmity or indevotion, and an inactiveness of spirit. All Christian people must come. They indeed, that are in the state of sin, must not come so, but yet they must come. First they must quit their state of death, and then partake of the bread of life. They that are at enmity with their neighbours, must come, that is no excuse for their not coming; only they must not bring their enmity along with them, but leave it, and then come. They that have variety of secular employment must come; only they must leave their secular thoughts and affections behind them, and then come and converse with God. If any man be well grown in grace, he must needs come, because he is excellently disposed to so holy a feast: but he that is but in the infancy of piety, had need to come, that so he may grow in grace. The strong must come, lest they become weak; and the weak, that they may become strong. The sick must come to be cured, the healthful to be preserved. They that have leisure must come, because they have no excuse; they that have no leisure, must come hither, that by so excellent religion they may sanctify their business. The penitent sinners must come, that they may be justified; and they that are justified, that they may be justified still. They that have fears and great reverence to these mysteries, and think no preparation to be sufficient, must receive, that they may learn how to receive the more worthily: and they that have a less degree of reverence, must come often to have it heightened: that as those creatures that live amongst the snows of the mountains, turn white with their food and conversation with such perpetual whitenesses; so our souls may be transformed into the similitude and union with Christ by our perpetual feeding on him and conversation, not only in his courts, but in his very heart, and most secret affections, and incomparable purities.

PRAYERS FOR SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

A PRAYER FOR THE GRACES OF FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY.

O LORD God of infinite mercy, of infinite excellency, who hast sent thy holy Son into the world to redeem us from an intolerable misery, and to teach us a holy religion, and to forgive us an infinite debt; give me thy Holy Spirit, that my understanding and all my faculties may be so resigned to the

discipline and doctrine of my Lord, that I may be prepared in mind and will to die for the testimony of Jesus, and to suffer any affliction or calamity, that shall offer to hinder my duty, or tempt me to shame, or sin, or apostasy : and let my faith be the parent of a good life, a strong shield to repel the fiery darts of the devil, and the author of a holy hope, of modest desires, of confidence in God, and of a never-failing charity to thee my God, and to all the world ; that I may never have my portion with the unbelievers, or uncharitable and desperate persons ; but may be supported by the strengths of faith in all temptations, and may be refreshed with the comforts of a holy hope in all my sorrows, and may bear the burden of the Lord, and the infirmities of my neighbour by the support of charity ; that the yoke of Jesus may become easy to me, and my love may do all the miracles of grace, till from grace it swell to glory, from earth to heaven, from duty to reward, from the imperfections of a beginning and still growing love, it may arrive to the consummation of an eternal and never-ceasing charity, through Jesus Christ the Son of thy love, the anchor of our hope, and the author and finisher of our faith : to whom with thee, O Lord God, Father of heaven and earth, and with thy Holy Spirit, be all glory, and love, and obedience, and dominion, now and for ever. Amen.

ACTS OF LOVE BY WAY OF PRAYER AND EJACULATION.

O GOD, thou art my God, early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory so, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Psal. lxiii. 1, &c.

I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts xxi. 13.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, thou Lord of Hosts ! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord : my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ; they will still be praising thee. Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 4.

O Blessed Jesus, thou art worthy of all adoration, and all honour, and all love : thou art the wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace ; of thy government and peace there shall be no end : thou art the brightness of thy Father's glory, the express image of his person, the appointed heir of all things. Thou upholdest all things by the word of thy power ; thou didst by thyself purge our sins ; thou art set on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; thou art made better than the angels ; thou hast by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Thou, O dearest Jesus, art the head of the church, the beginning and the first-born from the dead : in all things thou hast the pre-eminence, and it pleased the Father that in thee should all fulness dwell. Kingdoms are in love with thee, kings lay their crowns and sceptres at thy feet, and queens are thy handmaids, and wash the feet of thy servants.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID IN ANY AFFLICTION.

O ETERNAL God, Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, with much mercy look upon the sadnesses and sorrows of thy servant. My sins lie

heavy upon me, and press me sore, and there is no health in my bones by reason of thy displeasure and my sin. The waters are gone over me, and I stick fast in the deep mire, and my miseries are without comfort, because they are punishments of my sin: and I am so evil and unworthy a person, that though I have great desires, yet I have no dispositions or worthiness toward receiving comfort. My sins have caused my sorrow, and my sorrow does not cure my sins: and unless for thy own sake, and merely because thou art good, thou shalt pity me and relieve me, I am as much without remedy, as now I am without comfort. Lord, pity me; Lord, let thy grace refresh my spirit. Let thy comforts support me, thy mercy pardon me, and never let my portion be amongst hopeless and accursed spirits: for thou art good and gracious; and I throw myself upon thy mercy. Let me never let my hold go, and do thou with me, what seems good in thy own eyes. I cannot suffer more than I have deserved: and yet I can need no relief so great as thy mercy is: for thou art infinitely more merciful than I can be miserable; and thy mercy, which is above all thy own works, must needs be far above all my sin and all my misery. Dearest Jesus, let me trust in thee for ever, and let me never be confounded. Amen.

EJACULATIONS AND SHORT MEDITATIONS TO BE USED IN TIME OF
SICKNESS AND SORROW, OR DANGER OF DEATH.

HEAR my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the time of my trouble, incline thine ear unto me when I call: O hear me, and that right soon. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burnt up, as it were with a fire brand. My heart is smitten down and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread: and that because of thine indignation and wrath: for thou hast taken me up and cast me down: thine arrows stick fast in me, and thine hand presseth me sore. There is no health in my flesh because of thy displeasure; neither is there any rest in my bones by reason of my sin. My wickednesses are gone over my head, and are a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear. But I will confess my wickedness, and be sorry for my sin. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, neither chasten me in thy displeasure. Lord, be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness, according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. O remember not the sins and offences of my youth: but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin. Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, from thy all-hallowing and life-giving presence: and take not thy Holy Spirit, thy sanctifying, thy guiding, thy comforting, thy supporting and confirming Spirit from me.

O God, thou art my God for ever and ever: thou shalt be my guide unto death. Lord, comfort me, now that I lie sick upon my bed; make thou my bed in all my sickness. O deliver my soul from the place of hell: and do thou receive me. My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and my age is even as nothing in respect of thee; and

verily every man living is altogether vanity. When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like a moth fretting a garment: every man therefore is but vanity. And now, Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is even in thee. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling: hold not thy peace at my tears. Take this plague away from me: I am consumed by the means of thy heavy hand. I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen. My soul cleaveth unto the dust: O quicken me according to thy word. And when the snares of death compass me round about, let not the pains of hell take hold upon me.

AN ACT OF FAITH CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION AND THE
DAY OF JUDGMENT.

I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, though my reins be consumed within me. Job xix. 25, &c.

God shall come and shall not keep silence: there shall go before him a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him: he shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people. O blessed Jesu, thou art my judge and thou art my advocate: have mercy upon me in the hour of my death, and in the day of judgment. See John v. 28, and 1 Thess. iv. 15.

SHORT PRAYERS TO BE SAID BY SICK PERSONS.

O HOLY Jesus, thou art a merciful high-priest, and touched with the sense of our infirmities; thou knowest the sharpness of my sickness and the weakness of my person. The clouds are gathered about me, and thou hast covered me with thy storm: my understanding hath not such apprehension of things as formerly. Lord, let thy mercy support me, thy Spirit guide me, and lead me through the valley of this death safely; that I may pass it patiently, holily, with perfect resignation; and let me rejoice in the Lord, in the hopes of pardon, in the expectation of glory, in the sense of thy mercies, in the refreshments of thy Spirit, in a victory over all temptations.

Thou hast promised to be with us in tribulation. Lord, my soul is troubled, and my body is weak, and my hope is in thee, and my enemies are busy and mighty; now make good thy holy promise. Now, O holy Jesus, now let thy hand of grace be upon me: restrain my ghostly enemies, and give me all sorts of spiritual assistances. Lord, remember thy servant in the day when thou bindest up thy jewels.

O take from me all tediousness of spirit, all impatience and unquietness: let me possess my soul in patience, and resign my soul and body into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and a blessed Redeemer.

O holy Jesu, thou didst die for us; by thy sad, pungent, and intolerable pains, which thou enduredst for me, have pity on me, and ease my pain, or increase my patience. Lay on me no more than thou shalt enable me to bear. I have deserved it all and more, and infinitely more. Lord, I am

weak and ignorant, timorous and inconstant, and I fear lest something should happen that may discompose the state of my soul, that may displease thee: do what thou wilt with me, so thou dost but preserve me in thy fear and favour. Thou knowest that it is my great fear, but let thy Spirit secure, that nothing may be able to separate me from the love of God in Jesus Christ: then smite me here, that thou mayest spare me for ever: and yet, O Lord, smite me friendly: for thou knowest my infirmities. Into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth. Come, Holy Spirit, help me in this conflict. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

[Let the sick man often meditate upon these following promises and gracious words of God.]

My help cometh of the Lord, who preserveth them that are true of heart. Psal. vii. 11.

And all they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee. Psal. ix. 10.

O how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and that thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in thee, even before the sons of men! Psal. xxxi. 21.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and upon them that put their trust in his mercy, to deliver their souls from death. Psal. xxxiii. 17.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart; and will save such as are of an humble spirit. Psal. xxxiv. 18.

Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast: how excellent is thy mercy, O God! and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Psal. xxxvi. 7.

They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house; and thou shalt give them to drink of thy pleasures, as out of the rivers. Ver. 8.

For with thee is the well of life; and in thy light we shall see light. Ver. 9.

Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Psal. xxxvii. 5.

But the salvation of the righteous cometh of the Lord: who is also their strength in the time of trouble. Ver. 40.

So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: doubtless there is a God, that judgeth the earth. Psal. lviii. 10.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and receivest unto thee: he shall dwell in thy court, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house, even of thy holy temple. Psal. lxxv. 4.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psal. cxxvi. 6.

It is written, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Heb. xiii. 5.

The prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Jam. v. 15.

Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. Hos. vi. 1.

If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John i. 9.

He that forgives shall be forgiven. Luke, vi. 37.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. 1 John v. 14.

And ye know, that he was manifested to take away our sins. 1 John iii. 5.

If ye, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? Matt. vii. 11.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

He that hath given us his Son, how should he not, with him, give us all things else? Rom. viii. 32.

ACTS OF HOPE TO BE USED BY SICK PERSONS.

I AM persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. viii. 38, 39.

I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comforts, who comforts us in all our tribulation. 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID IN BEHALF OF A SICK OR DYING PERSON.

O LORD God, there is no number of thy days nor of thy mercies, and the sins and sorrows of thy servant also are multiplied. Lord, look upon him with much mercy and pity, forgive him all his sins, comfort his sorrows, ease his pain, satisfy his doubts, relieve his fears, instruct his ignorances, strengthen his understanding, take from him all disorders of spirit, weakness and abuse of fancy. Restrain the malice and power of the spirits of darkness; and suffer him to be injured neither by his ghostly enemies, nor his own infirmities; and let a holy and a just peace, the peace of God, be within his conscience.

Lord, preserve his senses till the last of his time, strengthen his faith, confirm his hope, and give him a never-ceasing charity to thee our God, and to all the world: stir up in him a great and proportionable contrition for all the evils he hath done, and give him a just measure of patience for all he suffers: give him prudence, memory, and consideration, rightly to state the accounts of his soul; and do thou remind him of all his duty; that when it shall please thee, that his soul goes out from the prison of his body, it may be received by angels, and preserved from the surprise of evil spirits, and from the horrors and amazements of new and strange regions, and be laid up in the bosom of our Lord, till, at the day of thy second coming, it shall be re-united to the body which is now to be laid down in weakness and dishonour, but we humbly beg, may then be raised up with glory and power for ever to live, and to behold the face of God in the glories of the Lord Jesus, who is our hope, our resurrection, and our life, the light of our

eyes and the joy of our souls, our blessed and ever-glorious Redeemer. Amen.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID IN A STORM AT SEA.

O MY God, thou didst create the earth and the sea for thy glory and the use of man, and dost daily show wonders in the deep : look upon the danger and fear of thy servant. My sins have taken hold upon me, and without the supporting arm of thy mercy, I cannot look up ; but my trust is in thee. Do thou, O Lord, rebuke the sea, and make it calm ; for thee the winds and the sea obey : let not the waters swallow me up, but let thy Spirit, the Spirit of gentleness and mercy, move upon the waters. Be thou reconciled unto thy servants, and then the face of the waters will be smooth. I fear that my sins make me, like Jonas, the cause of the tempest. Cast out all my sins, and throw not thy servants away from thy presence and from the land of the living, into the depths, where all things are forgotten. But if it be thy will, that we shall go down into the waters, Lord, receive my soul into thy holy hands, and preserve it in mercy and safety till the day of restitution of all things : and be pleased to unite my death to the death of thy Son, and to accept of it so united as a punishment for all my sins, that thou mayest forget all thine anger, and blot my sins out of thy book, and write my soul there, for Jesus Christ's sake, our dearest Lord and most mighty Redeemer. Amen.

Then make an act of resignation, thus :

To God pertain the issues of life and death. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his own eyes. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Recite Psalm cvii. and cxxx.

A FORM OF A VOW TO BE MADE IN THIS OR THE LIKE DANGER.

IF the Lord will be gracious and hear the prayer of his servant, and bring me safe to shore, then I will praise him secretly and publicly, and pay unto the uses of charity [or religion] [*then name the sum you design for holy uses*]. O my God, my goods are nothing unto thee : I will also be thy servant all the days of my life, and remember this mercy and my present purposes, and live more to God's glory, and with a stricter duty. And do thou please to accept this vow as an instance of my importunity, and the greatness of my needs : and be thou graciously moved to pity and deliver me. Amen.

A PRAYER BEFORE A JOURNEY.

O ALMIGHTY God, who fillest all things with thy presence, and art a God afar off as well as near at hand ; thou didst send thy angel to bless Jacob in his journey, and didst lead the children of Israel through the Red sea, making it a wall on the right hand and on the left : be pleased to let thy angel go out before me and guide me in my journey, preserving me

from dangers of robbers, from violence of enemies, and sudden and sad accidents, from falls and errors. And prosper my journey to thy glory, and to all my innocent purposes : and preserve me from all sin, that I may return in peace and holiness, with thy favour and thy blessing, and may serve thee in thankfulness and obedience all the days of my pilgrimage ; and at last bring me to thy country, to the celestial Jerusalem, there to dwell in thy house, and to sing praises to thee for ever. Amen.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID BEFORE THE HEARING OR READING
THE WORD OF GOD.

O HOLY and eternal Jesus, who hast begotten us by thy word, renewed us by thy Spirit, fed us by thy sacraments, and by the daily ministry of thy word, still go on to build us up to life eternal. Let thy most Holy Spirit be present with me and rest upon me in the reading, or hearing, thy sacred word ; that I may do it humbly, reverently, without prejudice, with a mind ready and desirous to learn and to obey ; that I may be readily furnished and instructed to every good work, and may practise all thy holy laws and commandments, to the glory of thy holy name, O holy and eternal Jesus. Amen.

A FORM OF CONFESSION OF SINS AND REPENTANCE.

“ HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness ; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. For I will confess my wickedness and be sorry for my sin.” O my dearest Lord, I am not worthy to be accounted amongst the meanest of thy servants ; not worthy to be sustained by the least fragments of thy mercy, but to be shut out of thy presence for ever with dogs and unbelievers.—But for thy name’s sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

I am the vilest of sinners, and the worst of men : proud and vain-glorious, impatient of scorn or of just reproof ; not enduring to be slighted, and yet extremely deserving it : I have been cozened by the colours of humility, and when I have truly called myself vicious, I could not endure any man else should say so or think so. I have been disobedient to my superiors, churlish and ungente in my behaviour towards my inferiors, unchristian and unmanly.—But for thy name’s sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

O just and dear God, how can I expect pity or pardon, who am so angry and peevish, with and without cause, envious at good, rejoicing in the evil of my neighbours, negligent of my charge, idle and useless, timorous and base, jealous and impudent, ambitious and hard-hearted, soft, unmortified, and effeminate in my life, undevout in my prayers, without fancy or affection, without attendance to them or perseverance in them : but passionate and curious in pleasing my appetite of meat and drink and pleasures, making matter both for sin and sickness ; and I have reaped the cursed fruits of such providence, entertaining indecent and impure thoughts ; and I have brought them forth in indecent and impure actions, and the spirit of uncleanness hath entered in, and unhallowed the temple, which thou didst consecrate for the habitation of thy Spirit of love and holiness.—But for thy name’s sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

Thou hast given me a whole life to serve thee in, and to advance my hopes of heaven : and this precious time I have thrown away upon my sins and vanities, being improvident of my time and of my talent, and of thy grace and my own advantages, resisting thy Spirit and quenching him. I have been a great lover of myself, and yet used many ways to destroy myself. I have pursued my temporal ends with greediness and indirect means. I am revengeful and unthankful, forgetting benefits, but not so soon forgetting injuries, curious and murmuring, a great breaker of promises. I have not loved my neighbour's good, nor advanced it in all things, where I could. I have been unlike thee in all things. I am unmerciful and unjust : a sottish admirer of things below, and careless of heaven and the ways that lead thither.

But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

All my senses have been windows to let sin in, and death by sin. Mine eyes have been adulterous and covetous ; mine ears open to slander and detraction ; my tongue and palate loose and wanton, intemperate, and of foul language, talkative and lying, rash and malicious, false and flattering, irreligious and irreverent, detracting and censorious ; my hands have been injurious and unclean, my passions violent and rebellious, my desires impatient and unreasonable ; all my members and all my faculties have been servants of sin : and my very best actions have more matter of pity than of confidence, being imperfect in my best, and intolerable in most.—But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

Unto this and a far bigger heap of sin I have added also the faults of others to my own score, by neglecting to hinder them to sin in all that I could, and ought ; but I also have encouraged them in sin, have taken off their fears, and hardened their consciences, and tempted them directly, and prevailed in it to my own ruin and theirs, unless thy glorious and unspeakable mercy hath prevented so intolerable a calamity.

Lord, I have abused thy mercy, despised thy judgments, turned thy grace into wantonness. I have been unthankful for thy infinite loving-kindness. I have sinned and repented, and then sinned again, and resolved against it, and presently broke it ; and then I tied myself up with vows, and then was tempted, and then I yielded by little and little, till I was willingly lost again, and my vows fell off like cords of vanity.

Miserable man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of sin ?

And yet, O Lord, I have another heap of sins to be unloaded. My secret sins, O Lord, are innumerable, sins I noted not ; sins that I willingly neglected ; sins that I acted upon wilful ignorance and voluntary mispersuasion : sins that I have forgot ; and sins which a diligent and a watchful spirit might have prevented, but I would not. Lord, I am confounded with the multitude of them, and the horror of their remembrance, though I consider them nakedly in their direct appearance, without the deformity of their unhandsome and aggravating circumstances ; but, so dressed, they are a sight too ugly, an instance of amazement, infinite in degrees, and insufferable in their load.

And yet thou hast spared me all this while, and hast not thrown me into hell, where I have deserved to have been long since, and even now to have been shut up to an eternity of torments with insupportable amazement, fearing the revelation of thy day.

Miserable man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of sin ?

Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. Thou that prayest for me shalt be my judge.

THE PRAYER.

THOU hast prepared for me a more healthful sorrow : O deny not thy servant, when he begs sorrow of thee. Give me a deep contrition for my sins, a hearty detestation and loathing of them, hating them worse than death with torments. Give me grace entirely, presently, and for ever, to forsake them ; to walk with care and prudence, with fear and watchfulness, all my days ; to do all my duty with diligence and charity, with zeal and a never fainting spirit ; to redeem the time, to trust upon thy mercies, to make use of all the instruments of grace, to work out my salvation with fear and trembling : that thou mayest have the glory of pardoning all my sins, and I may reap the fruit of all thy mercies and all thy graces, of thy patience and long-suffering, even to live a holy life here, and to reign with thee for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SPECIAL DEVOTIONS.

O ETERNAL essence, Lord God, Father Almighty, maker of all things in heaven and earth ; it is a good thing to give thanks to thee, O Lord, and to pay to thee all reverence, worship, and devotion, from a clean and prepared heart ; and with an humble spirit to present a living and reasonable sacrifice to thy holiness and majesty : for thou hast given unto us the knowledge of thy truth : and who is able to declare thy greatness, and to recount all thy marvellous works, which thou hast done in all the generations of the world ?

O great Lord and Governor of all things, Lord and Creator of all things visible and invisible, who sittest upon the throne of thy glory, and beholdest the secrets of the lowest abyss and darkness, thou art without beginning, un-circumscribed, incomprehensible, unalterable, and seated for ever unmovable in thy own essential happiness and tranquillity ; thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is—

Our dearest and most gracious Saviour, our hope, the wisdom of the the Father, the image of thy goodness, the Word eternal, and the brightness of thy person, the power of God from eternal ages, the true light, that lighteneth every man, that cometh into the world, the redemption of man, and the sanctification of our spirits.

By whom the Holy Ghost descended upon the church ; the Holy Spirit of truth, the seal of adoption ; the earnest of the inheritance of the saints ; the first fruits of everlasting felicity ; the life-giving power ; the fountain of sanctification ; the comfort of the church, the ease of the afflicted, the support of the weak, the wealth of the poor, the teacher of the doubtful, scrupulous, and ignorant ; the anchor of the fearful, the infinite reward of all faithful souls ; by whom all reasonable and understanding creatures serve thee, and send up a never-ceasing and a never-rejected sacrifice of prayer and praises, and adoration.

All angels and archangels, all thrones and dominions, all principalities and powers, the cherubim with many eyes, and the seraphim covered with wings from the terror and amazement of thy brightest glory : these, and

all the powers of heaven, do perpetually sing praises and never-ceasing hymns and eternal anthems to the glory of the eternal God, the almighty Father of men and angels.

Holy is our God : holy is the Almighty : holy is the immortal : holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory. Amen. With these holy and blessed spirits I also, thy servant, O thou great lover of souls, though I be unworthy to offer praise to such a majesty ; yet out of my bounden duty, humbly offer up my heart and voice to join in this blessed choir, and confess the glories of the Lord. For thou art holy, and of thy greatness there is no end ; and in thy justice and goodness, thou hast measured out to us all thy works.

Thou madest man out of the earth, and didst form him after thine own image : thou didst place him in a garden of pleasure, and gavest him laws of righteousness to be to him a seed of immortality.

“ O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders, that he hath done for the children of men.”

For when man sinned and listened to the whispers of a tempting spirit, and refused to hear the voice of God, thou didst throw him out from paradise, and sentest him to till the earth ; but yet leftest not his condition without remedy, but didst provide for him the salvation of a new birth, and, by the blood of thy Son, didst redeem and pay the price to thine own justice for thine own creature, lest the work of thine own hands should perish.

“ O that men would therefore praise the Lord.” &c.

For thou, O Lord, in every age didst send testimonies from heaven, blessings, and prophets, and fruitful seasons, and preachers of righteousness, and miracles of power and mercy : thou spakest by thy prophets, and saidst, “ I will help by one that is mighty ;” and, in the fulness of time, spakest to us by thy Son, by whom thou didst make both the worlds, who, by the word of his power, sustains all things in heaven and earth ; who thought it no robbery to be equal to the Father ; who, being before all time, was pleased to be born in time, to converse with men, to be incarnate of a holy Virgin : he emptied himself of all his glories, took on him the form of a servant, in all things being made like unto us, in a soul of passions and discourse, in a body of humility and sorrow, but in all things innocent, and in all things afflicted : and suffered death for us, that we by him might live, and be partakers of his nature and his glories, of his body and of his Spirit, of the blessings of earth, and of immortal felicities in heaven.

“ O that men would therefore praise the Lord,” &c.

For thou, O holy and immortal God, O sweetest Saviour Jesus, wert made under the law, to condemn sin in the flesh : thou who knewest no sin, wert made sin for us ; thou gavest to us righteous commandments, and madest known to us all thy Father's will ; thou didst redeem us from our vain conversation, and from the vanity of idols, false principles, and foolish confidences, and broughtest us to the knowledge of the true and only God and our Father, and hast made us to thyself a peculiar people, of thy own purchase, a royal priesthood, a holy nation : thou hast washed our souls in the laver of regeneration, the sacrament of baptism : thou hast reconciled us by thy death, justified us by thy resurrection, sanctified us by thy spirit, sending him upon thy church in visible forms, and giving him in powers and miracles and mighty signs, and this incomparable continuing favour in gifts and sanctifying graces, and promising that he shall abide with us for ever : thou hast

fed us with thine own broken body, and given drink to our souls out of thine own heart, and hast ascended up on high, and hast overcome all the powers of death and hell, and redeemed us from the miseries of a sad eternity ; and sittest at the right hand of God, making intercession for us with a never-ceasing charity.

“ O that men would therefore praise the Lord,” &c.

The grave could not hold thee long, O holy and eternal Jesus : thy body could not see corruption, neither could thy soul be left in hell : thou wert free among the dead, and thou brokest the iron gates of death, and the bars and chains of the lower prisons. Thou broughtest comfort to the souls of the patriarchs, who waited for thy coming, who longed for the redemption of man, and the revelation of thy day. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saw thy day, and rejoiced : and when thou didst arise from thy bed of darkness, and ledest the grave-clothes behind thee, and didst put on a robe of glory (over which for forty days thou didst wear a veil,) and then enteredst into a cloud, and then into glory, then the powers of hell were confounded, then death lost its power and was swallowed up into victory ; and though death is not quite destroyed, yet it is made harmless and without a sting, and the condition of human nature is made an entrance to eternal glory ; and art become the prince of life, the first-fruits of the resurrection, the first-born from the dead, having made the way plain before our faces, that we may also arise again in the resurrection of the last day, when thou shalt come again unto us, to render to every man according to his works.

“ O that men would therefore praise the Lord,” &c.

O give thanks unto the Lord ; for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever.

O all ye angels of the Lord, praise ye the Lord ; praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, praise ye the Lord ; praise him and magnify him for ever.

And now, O Lord God, what shall I render to thy Divine Majesty for all the benefits, thou hast done unto thy servant in my personal capacity ?

Thou art my Creator and my Father, my protector and my Guardian : thou hast brought me from my mother's womb : thou hast told all my joints, and in thy book were all my members written : thou hast given me a comely body, Christian and careful parents, holy education : thou hast been my guide and my teacher all my days : thou hast given me ready faculties, an unloosed tongue, a cheerful spirit, straight limbs, a good reputation, and liberty of person, a quiet life, and a tender conscience, [a loving wife or husband, and hopeful children]. Thou wert my hope from my youth, through thee have I been holden up, ever since I was born. Thou hast clothed me and fed me, given me friends and blessed them : given me many days of comfort, and health, free from those sad infirmities with which many of thy saints and dearest servants are afflicted. Thou hast sent thy angel to snatch me from the violence of fire and water, to prevent precipices, fracture of bones, to rescue me from thunder and lightning, plague and pestilential diseases, murder and robbery, violence of chance and enemies, and all the spirits of darkness : and in the days of sorrow thou hast refreshed me ; in the destitution of provisions thou hast taken care of me, and thou hast said unto me, “ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

“ I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation.”

Thou, O my dearest Lord and Father, hast taken care of my soul, hast pitied my miseries, sustained my infirmities, relieved and instructed my ignorances ; and though I have broken thy righteous laws and commandments, run passionately after vanities, and was in love with death, and was dead in sin, and was exposed to thousands of temptations, and fell foully and continued in it, and loved to have it so, and hated to be reformed ; yet thou didst call me with the checks of conscience, with daily sermons and precepts of holiness, with fear and shame, with benefits and the admonitions of thy most Holy Spirit, by the counsel of my friends, by the example of good persons, with holy books and thousands of excellent arts, and wouldst not suffer me to perish in my folly, but didst force me to attend to thy gracious calling, and hast put me into a state of repentance, and possibilities of pardon, being infinitely desirous I should live, and recover, and make use of thy grace, and partake of thy glories.

“ I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation. For salvation belongeth unto the Lord, and thy blessing is upon thy servant. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. For of thee and in thee, and through and for thee, are all things. Blessed be the name of God, from generation to generation.” Amen.

FORM OF THANKSGIVING TO BE SAID ON ANY SPECIAL DELIVERANCE.

O MOST merciful and gracious God, thou fountain of all mercy and blessing, thou hast opened the hand of thy mercy to fill me with blessings, and the sweet effects of thy lovingkindness : thou feedest us like a shepherd, thou governest us as a king, thou bearest us in thy arms like a nurse, thou dost cover us under the shadow of thy wings and shelter us like a hen ; thou, O dearest Lord ! wakest for us as a watchman, thou providest for us like a husband, thou lovest us as a friend, and thinkest on us perpetually, as a careful mother on her helpless babe, and art exceeding merciful to all that fear thee. And now, O Lord, thou hast added this great blessing of deliverance from my late danger [*hear name the blessing*] ; it was thy hand and the help of thy mercy that relieved me ; the waters of affliction had drowned me, and the stream had gone over my soul, if the Spirit of the Lord had not moved upon these waters. Thou, O Lord, didst revoke thy angry sentence, which I had deserved, and which was gone out against me. Unto thee, O Lord, I ascribe the praise and honour of my redemption. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversity. As thou hast spread thy hand upon me for a covering, so also enlarge my heart with thankfulness, and fill my mouth with praises, that my duty and returns to thee may be great as my needs of mercy are : and let thy gracious favours and lovingkindness endure for ever and ever upon thy servant ; and grant that what thou hast sown in mercy, may spring up in duty : and let thy grace so strengthen my purposes, that I may sin no more, lest thy threatening return upon me in anger, and thy anger break me into pieces : but let me walk in the light of thy favour, and in the paths of thy commandments : that I, living here to the glory of thy name, may at last enter into the glory of my Lord, to spend a whole eternity in giving praise to thy exalted and ever-glorious name. Amen.

“ We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting. To thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein. To thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory. The glorious company of the apostles praise thee. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise thee. The noble army of martyrs praise thee. The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee, the Father of an infinite majesty ; thine honourable, true, and only Son ; also the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Thou art the king of glory, O Christ : thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb. When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe, that thou shalt come to be our judge. We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting. O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage. Govern them, and lift them up for ever. Day by day we magnify thee, and we worship thy name ever world without end. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us. O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee, O Lord, in thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded.” Amen.

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AFTER THE RECEIVING OF SOME
GREAT BLESSING.

O LORD God, Father of mercies, the fountain of comfort and blessing, of life and peace, of plenty and pardon, who fillest heaven with thy glory, and earth with thy goodness ; I give thee the most earnest, most humble, and most enlarged returns of my glad and thankful heart, for thou hast refreshed me with thy comforts, and enlarged me with thy blessing : thou hast made my flesh and my bones to rejoice : for besides the blessings of all mankind, the blessings of nature and the blessings of grace, the support of every minute, and the comforts of every day, thou hast opened thy bosom, and at this time hast poured out an excellent expression of thy loving-kindness [*here name the blessing*]. What am I, O Lord, and what is my father’s house, what is the life and what are the capacities of thy servant, that thou shouldest do this unto me ; that the great God of men and angels should make a special decree in heaven for me, and send out an angel of blessing, and instead of condemning and ruining me, as I miserably have deserved, to distinguish me from many my equals and my betters, by this and many other special acts of grace and favour ?

Praised be the Lord daily, even the Lord that helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us. He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation : God is the Lord, by whom we escape death. Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side.

Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works ; I will rejoice in giving praise for the operation of thy hands.

O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his name : tell the people, what things he hath done.

As for me, I will give great thanks unto the Lord, and praise him among the multitude.

Blessed be the Lord God, even the Lord God of Israel, which only doeth wondrous and gracious things.

And blessed be the name of his majesty for ever : and all the earth shall be filled with his majesty. Amen. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

As it was in the beginning, &c.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID ON THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS OR THE
BIRTH OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR JESUS.

O HOLY and almighty God, Father of mercies, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of thy love and eternal mercies, I adore and praise and glorify thy infinite and unspeakable love and wisdom, who hast sent thy Son from the bosom of felicities to take upon him our nature and our misery and our guilt, and hast made the Son of God to become the Son of man, that we might become the sons of God, and partakers of the Divine nature : since thou hast so exalted human nature, be pleased also to sanctify my person, that, by a conformity to the humility and laws and sufferings of my dearest Saviour, I may be united to his Spirit, and be made all one with the most holy Jesus. Amen.

O holy and eternal Jesus, who didst pity mankind lying in his blood and sin and misery, and didst choose our sadnesses and sorrows that thou mightest make us to partake of thy felicities ; let thine eyes pity me, thy hands support me, thy holy feet tread down all the difficulties in my way to heaven : let me dwell in thy heart, be instructed with thy wisdom, moved by thy affections, choose with thy will, and be clothed with thy righteousness ; that, in the day of judgment, I may be found having on thy garments, sealed with thy impression ; and that, bearing upon every faculty and member the character of my elder brother, I may not be cast out with strangers and unbelievers. Amen.

O holy and ever-blessed Spirit, who didst overshadow the holy virgin-mother of our Lord, and caused her to conceive by a miraculous and mysterious manner ; be pleased to overshadow my soul, and enlighten my spirit, that I may conceive the holy Jesus in my heart, and may bear him in my mind, and may grow up to the fulness of the stature of Christ, to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Amen.

To God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the eternal Son that was incarnate and born of a virgin, to the Spirit of the Father and the Son, be all honour and glory, worship and adoration, now and for ever. Amen.

[The same form of prayer may be used upon our own birthday, or day of our baptism : adding the following prayer.]

A PRAYER TO BE SAID UPON OUR BIRTH-DAY, OR DAY OF BAPTISM.

O BLESSED and eternal God, I give thee praise and glory for thy great mercy to me, in causing me to be born of Christian parents, and didst not allot to me a portion with misbelievers and heathen that have not known

thee. Thou didst not suffer me to be strangled at the gate of the womb, but thy hand sustained and brought me to the light of the world, and the illumination of baptism, with thy grace preventing my election, and by an artificial necessity and holy prevention engaging me to the profession and practices of Christianity. Lord, since that, I have broken the promises made in my behalf, and which I confirmed by my after-act; I went back from them by an evil life: and yet thou hast still continued to me life and time of repentance; and didst not cut me off in the beginning of my days, and the progress of my sins. O dearest God, pardon the errors and ignorances, the vices and vanities of my youth, and the faults of my more forward years, and let me never more stain the whiteness of my baptismal robe: and now that by thy grace I still persist in the purposes of obedience, and do give up my name to Christ, and glory to be a disciple of thy institution, and a servant of Jesus, let me never fail of thy grace: let no root of bitterness spring up, and disorder my purposes, and defile my spirit. O let my years be so many degrees of nearer approach to thee: and forsake me not, O God, in my old age, when I am grey-headed; and when my strength faileth me, be thou my strength and my guide unto death; that I may reckon my years, and apply my heart unto wisdom; and at last, after the spending a holy and a blessed life, I may be brought unto a glorious eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Then add the form of thanksgiving formerly described].

A PRAYER TO BE SAID UPON THE DAYS OF THE MEMORY OF
APOSTLES, MARTYRS, &c.

O ETERNAL God, to whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and in whom the souls of them that be elected, after they be delivered from the burden of the flesh be in peace and rest from their labours, and their works follow them, and their memory is blessed; I bless and magnify thy holy and ever-glorious name, for the great grace and blessing manifested to thy apostles and martyrs, and other holy persons, who have glorified thy name in the days of their flesh, and have served the interest of religion and of thy service: and this day we have thy servant [*name the apostle, or martyr, &c.*] in remembrance, whom thou hast led through the troubles and temptations of this world, and now hast lodged in the bosom of a certain hope and great beatitude, until the day of restitution of all things. Blessed be the mercy and eternal goodness of God; and the memory of all thy saints is blessed. Teach me to practice their doctrine, to imitate their lives, following their example, and being united as a part of the same mystical body by the band of the same faith, and a holy hope, and a never-ceasing charity. And may it please thee, of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom, that we with thy servant and all others departed in the true faith and fear of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting kingdom. Amen.

A PRAYER RECORDING CHRIST'S PASSION, TO BE USED BEFORE
RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT.

ALL praise, honour, and glory, be to the holy and eternal Jesus. I adore thee, O blessed Redeemer, eternal God, the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel; for thou hast done and suffered for me more than I could wish; more than I could think of; even all that a lost and a miserable perishing sinner could possibly need.

Thou wert afflicted with thirst and hunger, with heat and cold, with labours and sorrows, with hard journeys and restless nights; and when thou wert contriving all the mysterious and admirable ways of paying our scores, thou didst suffer thyself to be designed to slaughter by those for whom in love thou wert ready to die.

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the Son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus; for thou wentest about doing good, working miracles of mercy, healing the sick, comforting the distressed, instructing the ignorant, raising the dead, enlightening the blind, strengthening the lame, straitening the crooked, relieving the poor, preaching the gospel, and reconciling sinners by the mightiness of thy power, by the wisdom of thy Spirit, by the word of God, and the merits of thy passion, thy healthful and bitter passion.

"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him," &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, who wert content to be conspired against by the Jews, to be sold by thy servant for a vile price, and to wash the feet of him that took money for thy life, and to give to him and to all thy apostles thy most holy body and blood, to become a sacrifice for their sins, even for their betraying and denying thee; and for all my sins, even for my crucifying thee afresh, and for such sins, which I am ashamed to think, but that the greatness of my sins magnify the infiniteness of thy mercies, who didst so great things for so vile a person.

"Lord, what is man," &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, who, being to depart the world, didst comfort thy apostles, pouring out into their ears and hearts treasures of admirable discourses; who didst recommend them to thy Father with a mighty charity, and then didst enter into the garden set with nothing but briers and sorrows, where thou didst suffer a most unspeakable agony, until the sweat strained through thy pure skin like drops of blood, and there didst sigh and groan, and fall flat upon the earth, and pray, and submit to the intolerable burden of thy Father's wrath, which I had deserved, and thou sufferedst.

"Lord, what is man," &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, who hast sanctified to us all our natural infirmities and passions, by vouchsafing to be in fear and trembling and sore amazement, by being bound and imprisoned, by being harassed and dragged with cords of violence and rude hands, by being drenched in the brook in the way, by being sought after like a thief, and used like a sinner, who wert the most holy and the most innocent, cleaner than an angel, and brighter than the morning star.

"Lord, what is man," &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be thy loving-kindness and pity, by which thou didst neglect thy own sorrows, and go to comfort the sadness of thy disciples, quickening their dulness, encouraging their duty, arming their weakness with excellent precepts against the day of trial. Blessed be that humility and sorrow of thine, who, being Lord of the angels, yet wouldest need and receive comfort from thy servant the angel ; who didst offer thyself, to thy persecutors, and madest them able to seize thee ; and didst receive the traitor's kiss, and sufferedst a veil to be thrown over thy holy face, that thy enemies might not presently be confounded by so bright a lustre ; and wouldest do a miracle to cure a wound of one of thy spiteful enemies ; and didst reprove a zealous servant in behalf of a malicious adversary : and then didst go like a lamb to the slaughter, without noise or violence or resistance, when thou couldst have commanded millions of angels for thy guard and rescue.

“ Lord, what is man,” &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be that holy sorrow thou didst suffer, when thy disciples fled, and thou wert left alone in the hands of cruel men, who like evening wolves, thirsted for a draught of thy best blood : and thou wert led to the house of Annas, and there asked ensnaring questions, and smitten on the face by him whose ear thou hadst but lately healed ; and from thence wert dragged to the house of Caiaphas ; and there all night didst endure spittings, affronts, scorn, contumelies, blows, and intolerable insolences ; and all this for man, who was thy enemy, and the cause of all thy sorrows.

“ Lord, what is man,” &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be thy mercy, who, when thy servant Peter denied thee and forsook thee, and forswore thee, didst look back upon him, and, by that gracious and chiding look, didst call him back to himself and thee ; who wert accused before the high-priest, and railed upon, and examined to evil purposes, and with designs of blood ; who wert declared guilty of death for speaking a most necessary and most probable (i. e. capable of abundant proof) truth ; who wert sent to Pilate and found innocent, and sent to Herod and still found innocent, and wert arrayed in white, both to declare thy innocence, and yet to deride thy person, and wert sent back to Pilate, and examined again, and yet nothing but innocence found in thee, and malice round about thee to devour thy life, which yet thou wert more desirous to lay down for them, than they were to take it from thee.

“ Lord, what is man,” &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be that patience and charity, by which for our sakes thou wert content to be smitten with canes, and have that holy face, which angels with joy and wonder do behold, be spit upon, and be despised, when compared with Barabbas, and scourged most rudely with unhallowed hands, till the pavement was purpled with that holy blood, and condemned to a sad and shameful, a public and painful death, and arrayed in scarlet, and crowned with thorns, and stripped naked, and then clothed, and loaden with the cross, and tormented with a tablet stuck with nails at the fringes of thy garment, and bound hard with cords, and dragged most vilely and most piteously, till the load was too great, and did sink thy tender and virginal body to the earth ; and yet didst comfort the weeping women, and didst more pity thy persecutors than thyself,

and wert grieved for the miseries of Jerusalem to come forty years after, more than for thy present passion.

“Lord, what is man,” &c.

Blessed be thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be that incomparable sweetness and holy sorrow, which thou sufferedst, when thy holy hands and feet were nailed upon the cross, and the cross, being set in a hollowness of the earth, did in the fall rend the wounds wider, and there naked and bleeding, sick and faint, wounded and despised, didst hang upon the weight of thy wounds three long hours, praying for thy persecutors, satisfying thy Father's wrath, reconciling the penitent thief, providing for thy holy and afflicted mother, tasting vinegar and gall; and when the fulness of thy suffering was accomplished, didst give thy soul into the hands of God, and didst descend to the regions of longing souls, who waited for the revelation of this thy day in their prisons of hope: and then thy body was transfixed with a spear, and issued forth two sacraments, water and blood, and thy body was composed to burial, and dwelt in darkness three days and three nights.

“Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou thus visitest him?”

THE PRAYER.

THUS, O blessed Jesu, thou didst finish thy holy passion with pain and anguish so great, that nothing could be greater than it, except thyself and thy own infinite mercy: and all this for man, even for me, than whom nothing could be more miserable, thyself only excepted, who becamest so by undertaking our guilt and our punishment. And now, Lord, who hast done so much for me, be pleased only to make it effectual to me, that it may not be useless and lost as to my particular, lest I become eternally miserable, and lost to all hopes and possibilities of comfort. All this deserves more love than I have to give: but, Lord, do thou turn me all into love, and all my love into obedience, and let my obedience be without interruption, and then I hope, thou wilt accept such a return as I can make. Make me to be something, that thou delightest in, and thou shalt have all that I am or have from thee, even whatsoever thou makest fit for thyself. Teach me to live wholly for my Saviour Jesus, and to be ready to die for Jesus, and to be conformable to his life and sufferings, and to be united to him by inseparable unions, and to own no passions, but what may be servants to Jesus and disciples of his institution. O sweetest Saviour, clothe my soul with thy holy robe; hide my sins in thy wounds, and bury them in thy grave; and let me rise in the life of grace, and abide and grow in it, till I arrive at the kingdom of glory. Amen.

“Our Father,” &c.

A FORM OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. *For ourselves.*

O THOU gracious Father of mercy, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon thy servants, who bow our heads, and our knees, and our hearts to thee: pardon and forgive us all our sins: give us the grace of holy repentance, and a strict obedience to thy holy word: strengthen us in

the inner man with the power of thy Holy Ghost for all the parts and duties of our calling and holy living : preserve us for ever in the unity of the holy catholic church, and in the integrity of the Christian faith, and in the love of God and of our neighbours, and in hope of life eternal. Amen.

2. For the whole Catholic Church.

O HOLY Jesus, King of the saints, and Prince of the catholic church, preserve thy spouse, whom thou hast purchased with thy right hand, and redeemed and cleansed with thy blood,—the whole catholic church from one end of the earth to the other ; she is founded upon a rock, but planted in the sea. O preserve her safe from schism, heresy, and sacrilege. Unite all her members with the bands of faith, hope, and charity, and an external communion, when it shall seem good in thine eyes. Let the daily sacrifice of prayer and sacramental thanksgiving never cease, but be for ever presented thee, and for ever united to the intercession of her dearest Lord, and for ever prevail for the obtaining for every of its members grace and blessing, pardon and salvation. Amen.

3. For all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors.

O KING of kings, and Prince of all the rulers of the earth, give thy grace and Spirit to all Christian princes, the spirit of wisdom and counsel, the spirit of government and godly fear. Grant unto them to live in peace and honour, that their people may love and fear them, and they may love and fear God. Speak good unto their hearts concerning the church, that they may be nursing fathers to it, fathers to the fatherless, judges and avengers of the cause of widows ; that they may be compassionate to the wants of the poor, and the groans of the oppressed ; that they may not vex or kill the Lord's people with unjust or ambitious wars : but may feed the flock of God, and may inquire after, and do all things which may promote peace, public honesty, and holy religion ; so administering things present, that they may not fail of the everlasting glories of the world to come, where all thy faithful people shall reign kings for ever. Amen.

4. For all the Orders of them that minister about holy things.

O THOU great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, holy and eternal Jesus, give unto thy servants, the ministers of the mysteries of Christian religion, the spirit of prudence and sanctity, faith and charity, confidence and zeal, diligence and watchfulness, that they may declare thy will unto the people faithfully, and dispense thy sacraments rightly, and intercede with thee graciously and acceptably for thy servants. Grant, O Lord, that by a holy life and a true belief, by well doing and patient suffering (when thou shalt call them to it,) they may glorify thee the great lover of souls, and after a plentiful conversion of sinners from the error of their ways, they may shine like the stars in glory. Amen.

5. For our nearest Relatives.

O GOD of infinite mercy, let thy loving mercy and compassion descend

upon the head of thy servants [*my wife, or husband, children, and family*] : be pleased to give them health of body and of spirit, a competent portion of temporals, so as may with comfort support them in their journey to heaven : preserve them from all evil and sad accidents, defend them in all assaults of their enemies, direct their persons and their actions, sanctify their hearts and words and purposes : that we all may, by the bands of obedience and charity, be united to our Lord Jesus, and, always feeling thee our merciful and gracious father, may become a holy family, discharging our whole duty in all our relations ; that we in this life being thy children by adoption and grace, may be admitted into thy holy family hereafter, for ever to sing praises to thee in the church of the first-born, in the family of thy redeemed ones. Amen.

6. *For our Parents, our Friends, and Benefactors.*

O GOD, merciful and gracious, who hast made [*my parents,*] my friends, and my benefactors, ministers of thy mercy and instruments of providence to thy servant, I humbly beg a blessing to descend upon the heads of [*name the persons, or the relations.*] Depute thy holy angels to guard their persons, thy Holy Spirit to guide their souls, thy providence to minister to their necessities ; and let thy grace and mercy preserve them from the bitter pains of eternal death, and bring them to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

7. *For all that lie under the Rod of War, Famine, Pestilence.*

O LORD God Almighty, thou art our father, we are thy children ; thou art our Redeemer, we thy people purchased with the price of thy most precious blood : be pleased to moderate thy anger towards thy servants ; let not thy whole displeasure arise, lest we be consumed and brought to nothing. Let health and peace be within our dwellings ; let righteousness and holiness dwell for ever in our hearts, and be expressed in all our actions, and the light of thy countenance be upon us in all our sufferings, that we may delight in the service and in the mercies of God for ever. Amen.

O gracious Father and merciful God, if it be thy will, say unto the destroying angel, "It is enough ;" and though we are not better than our brethren who are smitten with the rod of God, but much worse, yet may it please thee, even because thou art good, and because we are timorous and sinful, not yet fitted for our appearance, to set thy mark upon our foreheads, that thy angel, the minister of thy justice, may pass over us and hurt us not ; let thy hand cover thy servants and hide us in the clefts of the rock, in the wounds of the holy Jesus, from the present anger, that is gone out against us ; that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we may fear no evil, and suffer none : and those, whom thou hast smitten with thy rod, support with thy staff, and visit them with thy mercies and salvation, through Jesus Christ.

8 *For all Estates of Men and Women, in the Christian Church.*

O HOLY God, King eternal, out of the infinite store-houses of thy grace and mercy, give unto all virgins chastity, and a religious spirit ? to all persons dedicated to thee and to religion, continence and meekness, and active

zeal and an unwearied spirit ; to all married pairs, faith and holiness ; to widows and fatherless, and all that are oppressed, thy patronage, comfort, and defence ; to all Christian women simplicity and modesty, humility and chastity, patience and charity ; give unto the poor, to all that are robbed and spoiled of their goods, a competent support, and a contented spirit, and a treasure in heaven hereafter ; give unto prisoners and captives, to them that toil in the mines, and row in the galleys, strength of body and of spirit, liberty and redemption, comfort and restitution ; to all that travel by land, thy angel for their guide, and a holy and prosperous return ; to all that travel by sea, freedom from pirates and shipwreck, and bring them to the haven where they would be ; to distressed and scrupulous consciences, to melancholy and disconsolate persons, to all that are afflicted with evil and unclean spirits, give a light from heaven, great grace and proportionable comforts, and timely deliverance ; give them patience, and resignation ; let their sorrows be changed into grace and comfort, and let the storm waft them certainly to the regions of rest and glory.

Lord God of mercy, give to thy martyrs, confessors, and all thy persecuted, constancy and prudence, boldness and hope, a full faith, and a never-failing charity. To all who are condemned to death, do thou minister comfort, a strong, a quiet, and a resigned spirit ; take from them the fear of death, and all remaining affections to sin, and all imperfections of duty, and cause them to die full of grace, full of hope. And give to all faithful, and particularly to them, who have recommended themselves to the prayers of thy unworthy servant, a supply of all their needs, temporal and spiritual, and according to their several states and necessities, rest and peace, pardon and refreshment ; and show us all a mercy in the day of judgment. Amen.

Give, O Lord, to the magistrates equity, sincerity, courage, and prudence, that they may protect the good, defend religion, and punish the wrong doers. Give to the nobility wisdom, valour, and loyalty ; to merchants, justice and faithfulness ; to all artificers and labourers, truth and honesty ; to our enemies, forgiveness and brotherly kindness.

Preserve to us the heavens and the air in healthful influence and disposition, the earth in plenty, the kingdom in peace and good government, our marriages in peace and sweetness and innocence of society, thy people from famine and pestilence, our houses from burning and robbery, our persons from being burnt alive, from banishment and prison, from widowhood and destitution, from violence of pains, and passions, from tempests and earthquakes, from inundation of waters, from rebellion or invasion, from impatience and inordinate cares, from tediousness of spirit and despair, from murder, and all violent, accursed, and unusual deaths, from the surprise of sudden and violent accidents, from passionate and unreasonable fears, from all thy wrath, and from all our sins, good Lord, deliver and preserve thy servants for ever. Amen.

Repress the violence of all implacable, warring, and tyrant nations ; bring home unto thy fold all that are gone astray ; call into the church all strangers ; increase the number and holiness of thine own people ; bring infants to ripeness of age and reason ; confirm all baptized people with thy grace and with thy Spirit ; instruct the novices and new Christians : let a great grace and merciful providence bring youthful persons safely and holily through the indiscretions, and passions, and temptations of their younger years ; and to those whom thou hast or shalt permit to live to the age of

a man, give competent strength and wisdom ; take from them covetousness and churlishness, pride and impatience ; fill them full of devotion and charity, repentance and sobriety, holy thoughts, and longing desires after heaven and heavenly things ; give them a holy and a blessed death, and to us all a joyful resurrection through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MANNER OF USING THESE DEVOTIONS BY WAY OF PREPARATION
TO THE RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE just preparation to this holy feast consisting principally in a holy life, and consequently in the repetition of the acts of all virtues, and especially of faith, repentance, charity, and thanksgiving : to the exercise of these four graces, let the person, that intends to communicate, in the times set apart for his preparation and devotion, for the exercise of his faith recite the prayer or litany of the passion : for the exercise of repentance, the form of confession of sins with the prayer annexed ; and for the graces of thanksgiving and charity, let him use the special forms of prayer above described. Or if a less time can be allotted for preparatory devotion, the two first will be the more proper, as containing in them all the personal duty of the communicant. To which upon the morning of that holy solemnity, let him add

A PRAYER OF PREPARATION OR ADDRESS TO THE HOLY SACRAMENT.

An act of love.

O MOST gracious and eternal God, the helper of the helpless, the comforter of the comfortless, the hope of the afflicted, the bread of the hungry, the drink of the thirsty, and the Saviour of all them that wait upon thee ; I bless and glorify thy name, and adore thy goodness, and delight in thy love, that thou hast once more given me the opportunity of receiving the greatest favour, which I can receive in this world, even the body and blood of my dearest Saviour. O take from me all affection to sin or vanity ; let not my affections dwell below, but soar upwards to the element of love, to the seat of God, to the regions of glory, and the inheritance of Jesus ; that I may hunger and thirst for the bread of life, and the wine of elect souls, and may know no loves but the love of God and the most merciful Jesus. Amen.

An act of desire.

O BLESSED Jesus, thou hast used many arts to save me, thou hast given thy life to redeem me, thy Holy Spirit to sanctify me, thyself for my example, thy word for my rule, thy grace for my guide, the fruit of thy body hanging on the tree of the cross for the sin of my soul ; and, after all this, thou hast sent thy apostles and ministers of salvation to call me, to importune me, to constrain me to holiness, and peace, and felicity. O now come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ; my heart is desirous of thy presence, and thirsty of thy grace, and would fain entertain thee, not as a guest, but as an inhabitant, as the Lord of all my faculties. Enter in and take possession, and dwell with me for ever ; that I also may dwell in the heart of my dearest Lord, which was opened for me with a spear and love.

An act of contrition.

LORD, thou shalt find my heart full of cares and worldly desires, cheated with love of riches, and neglect of holy things, proud and unmortified, false and crafty to deceive itself, intricately and entangled with difficult cases of conscience, with knots which my own wildness and inconsideration and impatience have tied and shuffled together. O my dearest Lord, if thou canst behold such an impure seat, behold the place to which thou art invited is full of passion and prejudice, evil principles and evil habits, peevish and disobedient, lustful and intemperate, and full of sad remembrances, that I have often provoked to jealousy and to anger thee my God, my dearest Saviour, him that died for me, him that suffered torments for me, that is infinitely good to me, and infinitely good and perfect in himself. This, O dearest Saviour, is a sad truth, and I am heartily ashamed, and truly sorrowful for it, and do deeply hate all my sins, and am full of indignation against myself for so unworthy, so careless, so continued, so great a folly : and humbly beg of thee to increase my sorrow, and my care, and hatred, against sin ; and make my love to thee swell up to a great grace, and then to glory and immensity.

An act of faith.

THIS indeed is my condition : but I know, O blessed Jesus, that thou didst take upon thee my nature, that thou mightest suffer for my sins, and thou didst suffer to deliver me from them and from thy Father's wrath : and I was delivered from this wrath, that I might serve thee in holiness and righteousness all my days. Lord, I am as sure thou didst the great work of redemption for me and all mankind, as that I am alive. This is my hope, the strength of my spirit, my joy and my confidence : and do thou never let the spirit of unbelief enter into me and take me from this rock. Here I will dwell, for I have a delight therein : here I will live, and here I desire to die.

The petition.

THEREFORE, O blessed Jesu, who art my Saviour and my God, whose body is my food, and thy righteousness is my robe, thou art the priest and the sacrifice, the master of the feast and the feast itself, the physician of my soul, the light of my eyes, the purifier of my stains ; enter into my heart and cast out from thence all impurities, all the remains of the old man ; and grant I may partake of this holy sacrament with much reverence, and holy relish, and great effect, receiving hence the communication of thy holy body and blood, for the establishment of an unreprouvable faith, of an unfeigned love, for the fulness of wisdom, for the healing my soul, for the blessing and the preservation of my body, for the taking out the sting of temporal death, and for the assurance of a holy resurrection, for the ejection of all evil from within me, and the fulfilling all thy righteous commandments, and to procure for me a mercy and a fair reception at the day of judgment, through thy mercies, O holy and ever-blessed Saviour Jesus.

[Here also may be added the prayer after receiving the cup.]

EJACULATIONS TO BE SAID BEFORE, OR AT, THE RECEIVING THE
HOLY SACRAMENT.

LIKE as the hart desireth the water-brooks : so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God : when shall I come before the presence of God ? Psal. xlii. 1, 3.

O Lord my God, great are thy wondrous works which thou hast done : like as be also thy thoughts, which are to us ward : and yet there is no man that ordereth them unto thee. Psal. xl. 6.

O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy dwelling : and that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness, and with my heart will I give thanks to thee, O God, my God. Psal. xliii. 3, 4.

I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord : and so will I go to thine altar : that I may show the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Psal. xxvi. 6, 7.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try thou my reins and my heart. For thy loving-kindness is now and ever before my eyes ; and I will walk in thy truth. Ver. 2, 3.

Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me : thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Psal. xxiii. 5, 6.

This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. John vi. 50.

Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him, and hath eternal life abiding in him, and I will raise him up at the last day. John vi. 54, 56.

Lord, whither shall we go but to thee ? thou hast the words of eternal life. John vi. 68.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. John vii. 37.

The bread which we break, is it not the communication of the body of Christ ? and the cup which we drink, is it not the communication of the blood of Christ ? 1 Cor. x. 16.

What are those wounds in thy hands ? They are those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Zech. xiii. 4.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE RECEIVING, SAY,

LORD, I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof. But do thou speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed. Matt. viii. 8.

Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show thy praise. O God, make speed to save me : O Lord, make haste to help me.

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

AFTER RECEIVING THE CONSECRATED AND BLESSED BREAD, SAY,

O TASTE and see how gracious the Lord is : blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The beasts do lack and suffer hunger ; but they which seek the Lord, shall want no manner of thing that is good. Lord, what

am I, that my Saviour should become my food ; that the son of God should be the meat of worms, of dust and ashes, of a sinner, of him that was his enemy ? But this thou hast done to me, because thou art infinitely good and wonderfully gracious, and lovest to bless every one of us, in turning us from the evil of our ways. Enter into me, blessed Jesus : let no root of bitterness spring up in my heart ; but be thou Lord of all my faculties. O let me feed on thee by faith, and grow up by the increase of God to a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Amen. Lord, I believe : help mine unbelief.

Glory be to God, the Father, Son, &c.

AFTER RECEIVING THE CUP OF BLESSING.

IT is finished. Blessed be the mercies of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. O blessed and eternal High-priest, let the sacrifice of the cross, which thou didst once offer for the sins of the whole world, and which thou dost now and always represent in heaven to thy Father by thy never-ceasing intercession, and which this day hath been exhibited on thy holy table sacramentally, obtain mercy and peace, faith and charity, safety and establishment, to thy holy church, which thou hast founded upon a rock, the rock of a holy faith ; and let not the gates of hell prevail against her, nor the enemy of mankind take my soul out of thy hand, whom thou hast purchased with thy blood, and sanctified by thy spirit. Preserve all thy people from heresy and division of spirit, from scandal and the spirit of delusion, from sacrilege and hurtful persecutions. Thou, O blessed Jesus, didst die for us : keep me for ever in holy living, from sin and sinful shame, in the communion of thy church, and thy church in safety and grace, in truth and peace unto thy second coming. Amen.

Dearest Jesu, since thou art pleased to enter into me, O be jealous of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth : suffer no unclean spirit or unholy thought to come near thy dwelling, lest it defile the ground where thy holy feet have trod. O teach me so to walk, that I may never disrepute the honour of my religion, nor stain the holy robe which thou hast now put upon my soul, nor break my holy vows which I have made, and thou hast sealed, nor lose my right of inheritance, my privilege of being co-heir with Jesus, into the hope of which I have now further entered : but be thou pleased to love me with the love of a father, and of a brother, and a husband, and a lord ; and make me to serve thee in the communion of saints, in receiving the sacrament, in the practice of all holy virtues, in the imitation of thy life, and conformity to thy sufferings ; that I, having now put on the Lord Jesus, may marry his loves and his enmities, may desire his glory, and may obey his laws, and be united to his Spirit, that in the day of the Lord I may be found having on the wedding-garment, and bearing in my body and soul the marks of the Lord Jesus, that I may enter into the joy of my Lord, and partake of his glories for ever and ever. Amen.

EJACULATIONS TO BE USED ANY TIME THAT DAY, AFTER THE SOLEMNITY IS ENDED.

LORD, if I had lived innocently, I could not have deserved to receive the crumbs that fall from thy table. How great is thy mercy, who hast feasted me with the bread of virgins, with the wine of angels, with manna from heaven !

O when shall I pass from this dark glass, from this veil of sacraments, to the vision of thy eternal charity ; from eating thy body, to beholding thy face in thy eternal kingdom !

Let not my sins crucify the Lord of life again : let it never be said concerning me, "The hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table."

O that I might love thee as well as ever any creature loved thee ! Let me think nothing but thee, desire nothing but thee, enjoy nothing but thee.

O Jesus, be a Jesus unto me. Thou art all things unto me. Let nothing ever please me, but what savours of thee and thy miraculous sweetness.

Blessed be the mercies of our Lord, who of God is made unto me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Amen.

OF THE VANITY AND SHORTNESS OF MAN'S LIFE.

A MAN is a bubble, said the Greek proverb ; which Lucian represents with advantages and its proper circumstances, to this purpose ; saying, that all the world is a storm, and men rise up in their several generations, like bubbles descending from God and the dew of heaven, from a tear and drop of rain, from nature and Providence : and some of these instantly sink into the deluge of their first parent, and are hidden in a sheet of water, having had no other business in the world, but to be born, that they might be able to die : others float up and down two or three turns, and suddenly disappear, and give their place to others : and they that live longest upon the face of the waters, are in perpetual motion, restless and uneasy ; and, being crushed with the great drop of a cloud, sink into flatness and a froth ; the change not being great, it being hardly possible it should be more a nothing, than it was before. So is every man : he is born in vanity and sin ; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness : some of them without any other interest in the affairs of the world, but that they made their parents a little glad, and very sorrowful : others ride longer in the storm ; it may be until seven years of vanity be expired, and then peradventure the sun shines hot upon their heads, and they fall into the shades below, into the cover of death and darkness of the grave to hide them. But if the bubble stands the shock of a bigger drop, and outlives the chances of a child, of a careless nurse, of drowning in a pail of water, of being overlaid by a sleepy servant, or such little accidents, then the young man dances like a bubble, empty and gay, and shines like a dove's neck, or the image of a rainbow, which hath no substance, and whose very imagery and colours are fantastical ; and so he dances out the gayety of his youth, and is all the while in a storm, and endures only because he is not knocked on the head by a drop of bigger rain, or crushed by the pressure of a load of indigested meat, or quenched by the disorder of an ill-placed humour : and to preserve a man alive in the midst of so many chances and hostilities, is as great a miracle as to

create him ; to preserve him from rushing into nothing, and at first to draw him up from nothing, were equally the issues of an almighty power. And therefore the wise men of the world have contended, who shall best fit man's condition with words signifying his vanity and short abode. Homer calls a man "a leaf," the smallest, the weakest piece of a short-lived, unsteady plant. Pindar calls him "the dream of a shadow:" another, "the dream of the shadow of smoke." But St James spake by a more excellent Spirit, saying, "Our life is but a vapour,"* viz. drawn from the earth by a celestial influence ; made a smoke, or the lighter parts of water, tossed with every wind, moved by the motion of a superior body, without virtue in itself, lifted up on high, or left below, according as it pleases the sun its foster-father. But it is lighter yet. It is but appearing ; a fantastic vapour, an apparition, nothing real : it is not so much as a mist, not the matter of a shower, nor substantial enough to make a cloud ; but it is like Cassiopeia's chair, or Pelops' shoulder, or the circles of heaven, for which you cannot have a word that can signify a verier nothing. And yet the expression is one degree more made diminutive : a *vapour*, and *fantastical*, or a *mere appearance*, and this too but for a little while ; the very dream, the phantasm disappears in a small time, "like the shadow that departeth ; or like a tale that is told ; or as a dream, when one awaketh." A man is so vain, so unfixed, so perishing a creature, that he cannot long last in the scene of fancy : a man goes off, and is forgotten, like the dream of a distracted person. The sum of all is this : that thou art a man, than whom there is not in the world any greater instance of heights and declensions, of lights and shadows, of misery and folly, of laughter and tears, of groans and death.

And because this consideration is of great usefulness and great necessity to many purposes of wisdom and the Spirit ; all the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man, and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs a grave, where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies till they rise again in a fair or an intolerable eternity. Every revolution which the sun makes about the world, divides between life and death ; and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow ; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again : and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun. Then we sleep and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world : and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but during that state, are as disinterested, as if our eyes were closed with the clay, that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven years, our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy ; and still, every seven years, it is odds but we shall finish the last scene : and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our bodies in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals, first, in those parts that ministered to

* James iv. 14.

vice; and next, in them that served for ornament; and in a short time, even they that served for necessity become useless and entangled, like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death: and we have many more of the same signification; grey hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon the daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought, we die; and the clock strikes, and reckons on our portion of eternity: we form our words with the breath of our nostrils, we have the less to live upon for every word we speak.

Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it: and God, by all the variety of his providence, makes us see death every where, in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies, and the expectation of every single person. Nature hath given us one harvest every year, but death hath two: and the spring and the autumn sends throngs of men and women to charnel-houses; and all the summer long, men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and when the Sirian star makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them, eats and surfeits, and dies, and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter, only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves. Calentures and surfeit, cold and agues, are the four quarters of the year, and all minister to death; and you can go no whither, but you tread upon a dead man's bones.

The wild fellow in Petronius, that escaped upon a broken table from a shipwreck, as he was sunning himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man, rolled upon his floating bed of waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garment, and carried by his civil enemy, the sea, towards the shore to find a grave: and it cast him into some sad thoughts: that peradventure this man's wife in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good-man's return; or, it may be, his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss, which still is warm upon the good old man's cheek, ever since he took a kind farewell; and he weeps with joy to think how blessed he shall be, when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this is the end and sum of all their designs: a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea, a broken cable, a hard rock, and rough wind, dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the accident, are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck. Then looking upon the carcass, he knew it, and found it to be the master of the ship, who the day before cast up the accounts of his patrimony and his trade, and named the day when he thought to be at home: see how the

man swims who was so angry two days since; his passions are becalmed with the storm, his accounts cast up, his cares at an end, his voyage done, and his gains are the strange events of death, which whether they be good or evil, the men that are alive seldom trouble themselves concerning the interest of the dead.

But seas alone do not break our vessel in pieces: every where we may be shipwrecked. A valiant general, when he is to reap the harvest of his crowns and triumphs, fights unprosperously, or falls into a fever with joy and wine, and changes his laurel into cypress, his triumphal chariot to a hearse; dying the night before he was appointed to perish, in the drunkenness of his festival joys. It was a sad arrest of the loosenesses and wilder feasts of the French court, when their king (Henry II.) was killed really by the sportive image of a fight. And many brides have died under the hands of paranympths and maidens, dressing them for uneasy joy, the new and undiscerned chains of marriage, according to the saying of Bensirah, the wise Jew, "The bride went into her chamber, and knew not what should befall her there." Some have been paying their vows, and giving thanks for a prosperous return to their own house, and the roof hath descended upon their heads, and turned their loud religion into the deeper silence of a grave. And how many teeming mothers have rejoiced over their swelling wombs, and pleased themselves in becoming the channels of blessing to a family; and the midwife hath quickly bound their heads and feet, and carried them forth to burial! Or else the birth-day of an heir hath seen the coffin of the father brought into the house, and the divided mother hath been forced to travail twice, with a painful birth, and a sadder death.

There is no state, no accident, no circumstance of our life, but it hath been soured by some sad instance of a dying friend: a friendly meeting often ends in some sad mischance, and makes an eternal parting: and when the poet *Æschylus* was sitting under the walls of his house, an eagle hovering over his bald head, mistook it for a stone, and let fall his oyster, hoping there to break the shell, but pierced the poor man's skull.

Death meets us every where, and is procured by every instrument, and in all chances, and enters in at many doors: by violence and secret influence, by the aspect of a star and the stink of a mist, by the emissions of a cloud and the meeting of a vapour, by the fall of a chariot and the stumbling at a stone, by a full meal or an empty stomach, by watching at the wine or by watching at prayers; by the sun or the moon; by a heat or cold, by sleepless nights or sleeping days; by water frozen into the hardness and sharpness of a dagger; or water thawed into the floods of a river; by a hair or a raisin; by violent notion or sitting still; by severity or dissolution, by God's mercy or God's anger; by every thing in providence and every thing in manners; by every thing in nature and every thing in chance. We take pains to heap up things useful to our life, and get our death in the purchase; and the person is snatched away, and the goods remain. And all this is the law and constitution of nature; it is a punishment to our sins, the unalterable event of Providence, and the decree of Heaven. The chains that confine us to this condition, are strong as destiny, and immutable as the eternal laws of God.

I have conversed with some men, who rejoiced in the death or calamity of others, and accounted it as a judgment upon them for being on the other

side, and against them in the contention ; but within the revolution of a few months, the same man met with a more uneasy and unhandsome death ; which when I saw, I wept, and was afraid : for I knew that it must be so with all men ; for we also shall die ; and end our quarrels and contentions by passing to a final sentence.

THE CONSIDERATION REDUCED TO PRACTICE.

IT will be very material to our best and noblest purposes, if we represent this scene of change and sorrow, a little more dressed up in circumstances ; for so we shall be more apt to practice those rules, the doctrine of which is consequent to this consideration. It is a mighty change that is made by the death of every person, and it is visible to us, who are alive. Reckon but from the sprightfulness of youth, and the fair cheeks and full eyes of childhood, from the vigorousness and strong flexure of the joints of five-and-twenty, to the hollowness and dead paleness, to the loathsomeness and horror of a three days' burial, and we shall perceive the distance to be very great and very strange. But so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and, at first, it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece ; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age ; it bowed the head, and broke its stalk, and, at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman ; the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonour, and our beauty so changed, that our acquaintance quickly know us not ; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discoursings, that they who, six hours ago, tended upon us, either with charitable or ambitious services, cannot, without some regret, stay in the room alone, where the body lies stripped of its life and honour. I have read of a fair young German gentleman, who, living, often refused to be pictured, but put off the importunity of his friends' desire, by giving way, that, after a few days' burial, they might send a painter to his vault, and, if they saw cause for it, draw the image of his death unto the life. They did so, and found his face half eaten, and his midriff and back bone full of serpents ; and so he stands pictured among his armed ancestors. So does the fairest beauty change, and it will be as bad with you and me ; and then, what servants shall we have to wait upon us in the grave ? what friends to visit us ? what officious people to cleanse away the moist and unwholesome cloud reflected upon our faces from the sides of the weeping vaults, which are the longest weepers for our funeral ?

This discourse will be useful, if we consider and practise by the following rules and considerations respectively.

1. All the rich and all the covetous men in the world will perceive, and all the world will perceive for them, that it is but an ill recompense for all their cares, that by this time, all that shall be left will be this, that the neighbours shall say, "He died a rich man ;" and yet his wealth will not profit him in the grave, but hugely swell the sad accounts of doomsday. And he that kills the Lord's people with unjust or ambitious wars for an unrewarding interest, shall have this character, that he threw away all the days of his life,

that one year might be reckoned with his name, and computed by his reign or consulship ; and many men, by great labours and affronts, many indignities and crimes, labour only for a pompous epitaph, and a loud title upon their marble ; whilst those, into whose possessions their heirs or kindred are entered, are forgotten, and lie unregarded as their ashes, and without concernment or relation, as the turf upon the face of their grave. A man may read a sermon, the best and most passionate that ever man preached, if he shall but enter into the sepulchres of kings. In the same Escorial, where the Spanish princes live in greatness and power, and decree war or peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery, where their ashes and their glory shall sleep till time shall be no more ; and where our kings have been crowned, their ancestors lie interred, and they must walk over their grandsire's head to take his crown. There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copy of the greatest change, from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to die like men. There is enough to cool the flames of lust, to abate the heights of pride, to appease the itch of covetous desires, to sully and dash out the dissembling colours of a lustful, artificial, and imaginary beauty. There the warlike and the peaceful, the fortunate and miserable, the beloved and the despised princes mingle their dust, and pay down their symbol of mortality, and tell all the world, that, when we die, our ashes shall be equal to kings, and our accounts easier, and our pains or our crowns shall be less. To my apprehension it is a sad record, which is left by Athenæus concerning Ninus, the great Assyrian monarch, whose life and death are summed up in these words : " Ninus, the Assyrian, had an ocean of gold, and other riches more than the sand in the Caspian sea ; he never saw the stars, and perhaps he never desired it ; he never stirred up the holy fire among the Magi, nor touched his god with the sacred rod according to the laws ; he never offered sacrifice, nor worshipped the deity, nor administered justice, nor spake to his people, nor numbered them ; but he was most valiant to eat and drink, and, having mingled his wines, he threw the rest upon the stones. This man is dead : behold his sepulchre ; and now hear where Ninus is. Sometimes I was Ninus, and drew the breath of a living man ; but now am nothing but clay. I have nothing, but what I did eat, and what I served to myself in lust, that was and is all my portion. The wealth with which I was esteemed blessed, my enemies, meeting together, shall bear away, as the mad Thyades carry a raw goat. I am gone to hell ; and when I went thither, I neither carried gold, nor horse, nor silver chariot. I that wore a mitre, am now a little heap of dust." I know not any thing, that can better represent the evil condition of a wicked man, or a changing greatness. From the greatest secular dignity to dust and ashes his nature bears him, and from thence to hell his sins carry him, and there he shall be for ever under the dominion of chains and devils, wrath and an intolerable calamity. This is the reward of an unsanctified condition, and a greatness ill gotten or ill administered.

2. Let no man extend his thoughts, or let his hopes wander toward future and far-distant events and accidental contingencies. This day is mine and yours, but we know not what shall be on the morrow ; and every morning creeps out of a dark cloud, leaving behind it an ignorance and silence deep as midnight, and undiscerned as are the phantasms that make a chrisom-child to smile : so that we cannot discern what comes hereafter, unless we had a light from heaven brighter than the vision of an angel, even the spirit of

prophecy. Without revelation, we cannot tell whether we shall eat to-morrow, or whether a squinancy shall choke us : and it is written in the unrevealed folds of Divine predestination, that many, who are this day alive, shall to-morrow be laid upon the cold earth, and the women shall weep over their shroud, and dress them for their funeral. St James, in his epistle, notes the folly of some men, his contemporaries, who were so impatient of the event of to-morrow, or the accidents of next year, or the goods or evils of old age, that they would consult astrologers and witches, oracles and devils, what should befall them the next calends : what should be the event of such a voyage, what God hath written in his book concerning the success of battles, the election of emperors, the heirs of families, the price of merchandise, the return of the Tyrian fleet, the rate of Sidonian carpets ; and as they were taught by the crafty and lying demons, so they would expect the issue ; and oftentimes by disposing their affairs in order towards such events, really did produce some little accidents according to their expectation ; and that made them trust the oracles in greater things, and in all. Against this he opposes his counsel, that we should not search after forbidden records, much less by uncertain significations ; for whatsoever is disposed to happen by the order of natural causes or civil counsels, may be rescinded by a peculiar decree of providence, or be prevented by the death of the interested persons ; who, while their hopes are full, and their causes conjoined, and the work brought forward, and the sickle put into the harvest, and the first-fruits offered and ready to be eaten, even then if they put forth their hand to an event, that stands but at the door, at that door their body may be carried forth to burial, before the expectation shall enter into fruition. When Richilda, the widow of Albert earl of Ebersberg, had feasted the emperor Henry III., and petitioned in behalf of her nephew Welfo for some lands formerly possessed by the earl her husband ; just as the emperor held out his hand to signify his consent, the chamber-floor suddenly fell under them, and Richilda falling upon the edge of a bathing vessel was bruised to death, and stayed not to see her nephew sleep in those lands which the emperor was reaching forth to her, and placed at the door of restitution.

3. As our hopes must be confined, so must our designs : let us not project long designs, crafty plots, and diggings so deep that the intrigues of a design shall never be unfolded till our grand-children have forgotten our virtues or our vices. The work of our soul is cut short, facile, sweet, and plain, and fitted to the small portions of our shorter life ; and as we must not trouble our inquiry, so neither must we intricate our labour and purposes with what we shall never enjoy. This rule does not forbid us to plant orchards, which shall feed our nephews with their fruit ; for by such provisions they do something towards an imaginary immortality, and do charity to their relatives : but such projects are reprov'd, which discompose our present duty by long and future designs ; such, which by casting our labours to events at distance, makes us less to remember our death standing at the door. It is fit for a man to work for his day's wages, or to contrive for the hire of a week, or to lay a train to make provisions for such a time, as is within our eye, and in our duty, and within the usual periods of man's life ; for whatsoever is made necessary, is also made prudent : but while we plot and busy ourselves in the toils of an ambitious war, or the levies of a great estate, night enters in upon us, and tells all the world, how like fools

we lived, and how deceived and miserably we died. Seneca tells of Senecio Cornelius, a man crafty in getting, and tenacious in holding a great estate, and one who was as diligent in the care of his body as of his money, curious of his health, as of his possessions, that he all day long attended upon his sick and dying friend ; but, when he went away, was quickly comforted, supped merrily, went to bed cheerfully, and on a sudden being surprised by a squinancy, scarce drew his breath until the morning, but by that time died, being snatched from the torrent of his fortune, and the swelling tide of wealth, and a likely hope bigger than the necessities of ten men. This accident was much noted then in Rome, because it happened in so great a fortune, and in the midst of wealthy designs ; and presently it made wise men to consider, how imprudent a person he is who disposes of ten years to come, when he is not lord of to-morrow.

4. Though we must not look so far off, and pry abroad, yet we must be busy near at hand ; we must with all arts of the spirit, seize upon the present, because it passes from us while we speak, and because in it all our certainty does consist. We must take our waters as out of a torrent and sudden shower, which will quickly cease dropping from above, and quickly cease running in our channels here below ; this instant will never return again, and yet, it may be, this instant will declare or secure the fortune of a whole eternity. The old Greeks and Romans taught us the prudence of this rule : but Christianity teaches us the religion of it. They so seized upon the present, that they would lose nothing of the day's pleasure. " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die ;" that was their philosophy ; and at their solemn feasts they would talk of death to heighten the present drinking, and that they might warm their veins with a fuller chalice, as knowing the drink that was poured upon their graves would be cold and without relish. " Break the beds, drink your wine, crown your heads with roses, and besmear your curled locks with nard ; for God bids you to remember death : " so the epigrammatist speaks the sense of their drunken principles. Something towards this signification is that of Solomon, " There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour ; for that is his portion ; for who shall bring him to see that which shall be after him ? " But, although he concludes all this to be vanity, yet because it was the best thing that was then commonly known, that they should seize upon the present with a temperate use of permitted pleasures, I had reason to say, that Christianity taught us to turn this into religion. For he that by a present and constant holiness secures the present, and makes it useful to his noblest purposes, he turns his condition into his best advantage, by making his unavoidable fate become his necessary religion.

To the purpose of this rule is that collect of Tuscan hieroglyphics, which we have from Gabriel Simeon. " Our life is very short, beauty is a cozenage, money is false and fugitive ; empire is odious, and hated by them that have it not, and uneasy to them that have ; victory is always uncertain, and peace most commonly is but a fraudulent bargain ; old age is miserable, death is the period, and is a happy one, if it be not sorrowed by the sins of our life : but nothing continues but the effects of that wisdom which employs the present time in the acts of a holy religion, and a peaceable conscience : " for they make us to live even beyond our

funerals, embalmed in the spices and odours of a good name, and entombed in the grave of the holy Jesus, where we shall be dressed for a blessed resurrection to the state of angels and beatified spirits.

5. Since we stay not here, being people but of a day's abode, and our age is like that of a fly, and contemporary with a gourd, we must look somewhere else for an abiding city, a place in another country to fix our house in, whose walls and foundation is God, where we must find rest, or else be restless for ever. For whatsoever ease we can have or fancy here, is shortly to be changed into sadness, or tediousness: it goes away too soon, like the periods of our life: or stays too long, like the sorrows of a sinner: its own weariness, or a contrary disturbance, is its load; or it is eased by its revolution into vanity and forgetfulness; and where either there is sorrow or an end of joy, there can be no true felicity: which, because it must be had by some instrument, and in some period of our duration, we must carry up our affections to the mansions prepared for us above, where eternity is the measure, felicity is the state, angels are the company, the Lamb is the light, and God is the portion and inheritance.

RULES FOR LENGTHENING OUR DAYS.

1. IN the accounts of a man's life, we do not reckon that portion of days, in which we are shut up in the prison of the womb; we tell our years from the day of our birth; and the same reason, that makes our reckoning to stay so long, says also, that then it begins too soon. For then we are beholden to others to make the account for us; for we know not of a long time, whether we be alive or no, having but some little approaches and symptoms of a life. To feed, and sleep, and move a little, and imperfectly, is the state of an unborn child; and when he is born, he does no more for a good while; and what is it that shall make him to be esteemed to live the life of a man? and when shall that account begin? For we should be loath to have the accounts of our age taken by the measures of a beast: and fools and distracted persons are reckoned as civilly dead; they are no parts of the commonwealth, not subject to laws, but secured by them in charity, and kept from violence as a man keeps his ox: and a third part of our life is spent, before we enter into a higher order, into the state of a man.

2. Neither must we think, that the life of a man begins, when he can feed himself, or walk alone, when he can fight, or beget his like; for so he is contemporary with a camel or a cow; but he is first a man, when he comes to a certain, steady use of reason, according to his proportion: and when that is, all the world of men cannot tell precisely. Some are called at age, at fourteen; some, at one-and-twenty; some, never; but all men, late enough; for the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to the cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden

horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God ; and still while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly : so is a man's reason and his life. He first begins to perceive himself to see or taste, making little reflections upon his actions of sense, and can discourse of flies and dogs, shells and play, horses and liberty : but when he is strong enough to enter into arts and little institutions, he is at first entertained with trifles and impertinent things, not because he needs them, but because his understanding is no bigger, and little images of things are laid before him, like a cock-boat to a whale, only to play withal : but before a man comes to be wise, he is half dead with gouts and consumptions, with catarrhs and aches, with sore eyes and a worn-out body. So that if we must not reckon the life of a man but by the accounts of his reason, he is long before his soul be dressed ; and he is not to be called a man without a wise and an adorned soul, a soul at least furnished with what is necessary towards his well-being : but by the time his soul is thus furnished, his body is decayed ; and then you can hardly reckon him to be alive, when his body is possessed by so many degrees of death.

3. But there is yet another arrest. At first he wants strength of body. and then he wants the use of reason : and when this is come, it is ten to one, but he stops by the impediments of vice, and wants the strength of the spirit ; and we know that body and soul and spirit are the constituent parts of every Christian man. And now let us consider, what that thing is, which we call years of discretion. The young man is past his tutors, and arrived at the bondage of a caitiff spirit ; he is run from discipline, and is let loose to passion ; the man by this time hath wit enough to choose his vice, to act his lust, to court his mistress, to talk confidently and ignorantly, and perpetually, to despise his betters, to deny nothing to his appetite, to do things that, when he is indeed a man, he must for ever be ashamed of : for this is all the discretion that most men show in the first stage of their manhood ; they can discern good from evil ; and they prove their skill by leaving all that is good, and wallowing in the evils of folly and an unbridled appetite. And, by this time, the young man hath contracted vicious habits, and is a beast in manners, and therefore it will not be fitting to reckon the beginning of his life ; he is a fool in his understanding, and that is a sad death ; and he is dead in trespasses and sins, and that is a sadder : so that he hath no life but a natural, the life of a beast or a tree ; in all other capacities he is dead ; he neither hath the intellectual or the spiritual life, neither the life of a man nor of a Christian ; and this sad truth lasts too long. For old age seizes upon most men, while they still retain the minds of boys and vicious youth, doing actions from principles of great folly, and a mighty ignorance, admiring things useless and hurtful, and filling up all the dimensions of their abode with businesses of empty affairs, being at leisure to attend no virtue : they cannot pray, because they are busy, and because they are passionate : they cannot communicate, because they have quarrels and intrigues of perplexed causes, complicated hostilities, and things of the world ; and therefore they cannot attend to the things of God : little considering that they must find a time to die in ; when death comes, they must be at leisure for that. Such

men are like sailors loosing from a port, and tossed immediately with a perpetual tempest, lasting till their cordage crack, and either they sink, or return back again to the same place : they did not make a voyage, though they were long at sea. The business and impertinent affairs of most men steal all their time, and they are restless in a foolish motion : but this is not the progress of a man ; he is no farther advanced in the course of a life, though he reckon many years ; for still his soul is childish, and trifling like an untaught boy.

If the parts of this sad complaint find their remedy, we have by the same instruments also cured the evils and the vanity of a short life. Therefore,

1. Be infinitely curious you do not set back your life in the accounts of God by the intermingling of criminal actions, or the contracting vicious habits. There are some vices which carry a sword in their hand, and cut a man off before his time. There is a sword of the Lord, and there is a sword of a man, and there is a sword of the devil. Every vice of our own managing in the matter of carnality, of lust or rage, ambition or revenge, is a sword of Satan put into the hands of a man : these are the destroying angels ; sin is the Apollyon, the destroyer that is gone out, not from the Lord, but from the tempter ; and we hug the poison, and twist willingly with the vipers, till they bring us into the regions of an irrecoverable sorrow. We use to reckon persons as good as dead, if they have lost their limbs and their teeth, and are confined to an hospital, and converse with none but surgeons and physicians, mourners and divines, those *pollinctores*, the dressers of bodies and souls to funeral : but it is worse when the soul, the principle of life, is employed wholly in the offices of death : and that man was worse than dead, of whom Seneca tells, that being a rich fool, when he was lifted up from the bath and set into a soft couch, asked his slaves, Do I now sit ? The beast was so drowned in sensuality and the death of his soul, that, whether he did sit or no, he was to believe another. Idleness and every vice are as much of death as a long disease is, or the expense of ten years : and “ she that lives in pleasures, is dead while she liveth ” (saith the apostle) ; and it is the style of the spirit concerning wicked persons, “ they are dead in trespasses and sins.” For as every sensual pleasure, and every day of idleness and useless living, lops off a little branch from our short life : so every deadly sin and every habitual vice does quite destroy us : but innocence leaves us in our natural portions, and perfect period ; we lose nothing of our life, if we lose nothing of our soul’s health ; and therefore he that would live a full age, must avoid a sin, as he would decline the regions of death and the dishonours of the grave.

2. If we would have our life lengthened, let us begin betimes to live in the accounts of reason and sober counsels, of religion and the spirit, and then we shall have no reason to complain that our abode on earth is so short : many men find it long enough, and indeed it is so to all senses. But when we spend in waste what God hath given us in plenty, when we sacrifice our youth to folly, our manhood to lust and rage, our old age to covetousness and irreligion, not beginning to live till we are to die, designing that time to virtue which indeed is infirm to every thing and profitable to nothing ; then we make our lives short, and lust runs away with all the vigorous and healthful part of it, and pride and animosity steal the manly portion, and craftiness and interest possess old age ; we spend as if we had too much time, and knew not what to do with it : we fear every thing, like

weak and silly mortals ; and desire strangely and greedily, as if we were immortal : we complain our life is short, and yet we throw away much of it, and are weary of many of its parts ; we complain the day is long, and the night is long, and we want company, and seek out arts to drive the time away, and then weep, because it is gone too soon. But so the treasure of the capitol is but a small estate, when Cæsar comes to finger it, and to pay with it all his legions : and the revenue of all Egypt and the eastern provinces was but a little sum, when they were to support the luxury of Mark Antony, and feed the riot of Cleopatra : but a thousand crowns is a vast proportion to be spent in the cottage of a frugal person, or to feed a hermit. Just so is our life : it is too short to serve the ambition of a haughty prince, or a usurping rebel ; too little time to purchase great wealth, to satisfy the pride of a vain-glorious fool, to trample upon all the enemies of our just or unjust interest : but for the obtaining virtue, for the purchase of sobriety and modesty, for the actions of religion, God gave us time sufficient, if we make the “outgoings of the morning and evening,” that is, our infancy and old age, to be taken into the computations of a man. Which we may see in the following particulars

1. If our childhood being first consecrated by a forward baptism, it be seconded by a holy education, and a complying obedience ; if our youth be chaste and temperate, modest and industrious, proceeding through a prudent and sober manhood to a religious old age ; then we have lived our whole duration, and shall never die, but be changed, in a just time, to the preparations of a better and an immortal life.

2. If, besides the ordinary returns of our prayers and periodical and festival solemnities, and our seldom communions, we would allow to religion and the studies of wisdom those great shares that are trifled away upon vain sorrow, foolish mirth, troublesome ambition, busy covetousness, watchful lust, and impertinent amours, and balls and revellings and banquets, all that which was spent viciously, and all that time that lay fallow and without employment, our life would quickly amount to a great sum. Tostatus Abulensis was a very painful person, and a great clerk, and in the days of his manhood he wrote so many books, and they not ill ones, that the world computed a sheet for every day of his life ; I suppose they meant, after he came to the use of reason and the state of a man ; and John Scotus died about the two-and-thirtieth year of his age ; and yet besides his public disputations, his daily lectures of divinity in public and private, the books that he wrote, being lately collected and printed at Lyons, do equal the number of volumes of any two the most voluminous fathers of the Latin church. Every man is not enabled to such employments, but every man is called and enabled to the works of a sober and a religious life ; and there are many saints of God, that can reckon as many volumes of religion and mountains of piety, as those others did of good books. St Ambrose (and I think, from his example, St Augustine) divided every day into three *tertias* of employment : eight hours he spent in the necessities of nature and recreation ; eight hours in charity and doing assistance to others, despatching their businesses, reconciling their enmities, reproving their vices, correcting their errors, instructing their ignorances, transacting the affairs of his diocese ; and the other eight hours he spent in study and prayer. If we were thus minute and curious in the spending our time, it is impossible but our life would seem very long. For so have I seen an amorous

person tell the minutes of his absence from his fancied joy, and while he told the sands of his hour-glass, or the throbs and little beatings of his watch, by dividing an hour into so many members, he spun out its length by number, and so translated a day into the tediousness of a month. And if we tell our days by canonical hours of prayer, our weeks by a constant revolution of fasting-days or days of special devotion, and over all these draw a black cypress, a veil of penitential sorrow and severe mortification, we shall soon answer the calumny and objection of a short life. He that governs the day and divides the hours, hastens from the eyes and observation of a merry sinner; but loves to stand still, and behold, and tell the sighs, and number the groans and sadly-delicious accents of a grieved penitent. It is a vast work, that any man may do, if he never be idle: and it is a huge way, that a man may go in virtue, if he never goes out of his way by a vicious habit or a great crime: and he that perpetually reads good books, if his parts be answerable, will have a huge stock of knowledge. It is so in all things else. Strive not to forget your time, and suffer none of it to pass undiscerned; and then measure your life, and tell me, how you find the measure of its abode. However, the time we live is worth the money we pay for it; and therefore it is not to be thrown away.

3. When vicious men are dying, and scared with the affrighting truths of an evil conscience, they would give all the world for a year, for a month; nay, we read of some that called out with amazement for a truce but till the morning:—and if that year or some few months were given, those men think, they could do miracles in it. And let us a while suppose, what Dives would have done, if he had been loosed from the pains of hell, and permitted to live on earth one year. Would all the pleasures of the world have kept him one hour from the temple? would he not perpetually have been under the hands of priests, or at the feet of the doctors, or by Moses's chair, or attending as near the altar as he could get, or relieving poor Lazarus, or praying to God, and crucifying all his sin? I have read of a melancholy person, who saw hell but in a dream or vision, and the amazement was such, that he would have chosen ten times to die rather than feel again so much of that horror: and such a person cannot be fancied, but that he would spend a year in such holiness, that the religion of a few months would equal the devotion of many years, even of a good man. Let us but compute the proportions. If we should spend all our years of reason so, as such a person would spend that one, can it be thought, that life would be short and trifling, in which he had performed such a religion, served God with so much holiness, mortified sin with so great a labour, purchased virtue at such a rate and so rare an industry? It must needs be, that such a man must die, when he ought to die, and be like ripe and pleasant fruit falling from a fair tree, and gathered into baskets for the planter's use. He that hath done all his business, and is begotten to a glorious hope by the seed of an immortal Spirit, can never die too soon, nor live too long.

Xerxes wept sadly, when he saw his army of 2,300,000 men, because he considered, that, within a hundred years, all the youth of that army should be dust and ashes: and yet, as Seneca well observes of him, he was the man, that should bring them to their graves; and he consumed all that army in two years for whom he feared and wept the death after a hundred. Just so we do all. We complain, that within thirty or forty years, a little

more, or a great deal less, we shall descend again into the bowels of our mother, and that our life is too short for any great employment ; and yet we throw away five-and-thirty years of our forty, and the remaining five we divide between art and nature, civility and customs, necessity and convenience, prudent counsels and religion : but the portion of the last is little and contemptible, and yet that little is all that we can prudently account of our lives. We bring that fate and that death near us, of whose approach we are so sadly apprehensive.

4. In taking the accounts of your life, do not reckon by great distances, and by the periods of pleasure, or the satisfaction of your hopes, or the sating your desires : but let every intermedial day and hour pass with observation. He that reckons he hath lived but so many harvests, thinks they come not often enough, and that they go away too soon ; some lose the day longing for the night, and the night in waiting for the day. Hope and fantastic expectations spend much of our lives : and while with passion we look for a coronation, or the death of an enemy, or a day of joy, passing from fancy to possession without any intermedial notices, we throw away a precious year, and use it but as the burden of our time, fit to be pared off and thrown away, that we may come at those little pleasures, which first steal our hearts, and then steal our life.

5. A strict course of piety is the way to prolong our lives in the natural sense, and to add good portions to the number of our years : and sin is sometimes by natural casualty, very often by the anger of God, and the Divine judgment, a cause of sudden and untimely death. Concerning which I shall add nothing to what I have somewhere else said of this article, but only the observation of Epiphanius ; that for three thousand three hundred and thirty-two years, even to the twentieth age, there was not one example of a son, that died before his father ; but the course of nature was kept, that he who was first born in the descending line, did first die (I speak of natural death, and therefore Abel cannot be opposed to this observation), till that Terali, the father of Abraham, taught the people a new religion, to make images of clay and worship them ; and concerning him it was first remarked, that "Haran died before his father Terali in the land of his nativity : " God, by an unheard-of judgment and a rare accident punishing his newly-invented crime, by the untimely death of his son.

6. But if I shall describe a living man, a man that hath that life that distinguishes him from a fool or a bird, that which gives him a capacity next to angels, we shall find that even a good man lives not long, because it is long before he is born to this life, and longer yet before he hath a man's growth. "He that can look upon death, and see its face with the same countenance with which he hears its story ; that can endure all the labours of his life with his soul supporting his body ; that can equally despise riches, when he hath them, and when he hath them not ; that is not sadder, if they lie in his neighbour's trunks, nor more brag, if they shine round about his own walls : he that is neither moved with good fortune coming to him, nor going from him : that can look upon another man's lands evenly and pleasedly, as if they were his own, and yet look upon his own, and use them too, just as if they were another man's ; that neither spends his goods prodigally and like a fool, nor yet keeps them avariciously and like a wretch ; that weighs not benefits by weight and number, but by the mind and cir-

cumstances of him that gives them ; that never thinks his charity expensive, if a worthy person be the receiver ; he that does nothing for opinion's sake, but every thing for conscience, being as curious of his thoughts as of his actings in markets and theatres, and is as much in awe of himself as of a whole assembly : he that knows God looks on, and contrives his secret affairs as in the presence of God and his holy angels ; that eats and drinks because he needs it, not that he may serve a lust or load his belly ; he that is bountiful and cheerful to his friends, and charitable and apt to forgive his enemies ; that loves his country, and obeys his prince, and desires and endeavours nothing more than that he may do honour to God ;" this person may reckon his life to be the life of a man, and compute his months, not by the course of the sun, but the zodiac and circle of his virtues ; because these are such things which fools and children and birds and beasts cannot have ; these are therefore the actions of life, because they are the seeds of immortality. That day in which we have done some excellent thing, we may as truly reckon to be added to our life, as were the fifteen years to the days of Hezekiah.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MISERIES OF MAN'S LIFE.

As our life is very short, so it is very miserable ; and therefore it is well it is short. God in pity to mankind, lest his burden should be insupportable, and his nature an intolerable load, hath reduced our state of misery to an abbreviature ; and the greater our misery is, the less while it is like to last ; the sorrows of a man's spirit being like ponderous weights, which, by the greatness of their burden, make a swifter motion, and descend into the grave to rest and ease our wearied limbs ; for then only we shall sleep quietly, when those fetters are knocked off, which not only bound our souls in prison, but also ate the flesh, till the very bones opened the secret garments of their cartilages, discovering their nakedness and sorrow.

1. Here is no place to sit down in, but you must rise as soon as you are set, for we have gnats in our chambers, and worms in our gardens, and spiders and flies in the palaces of the greatest kings. How few men in the world are prosperous ! What an infinite number of slaves and beggars, of persecuted and oppressed people, fill all corners of the earth with groans, and heaven itself with weeping, prayers, and sad remembrances ! How many provinces and kingdoms are afflicted by a violent war, or made desolate by popular diseases ! Some whole countries are ravaged with fatal evils, or periodical sicknesses. Grand Cairo in Egypt feels the plague every three years returning like a quartan ague, and destroying many thousands of persons. All the inhabitants of Arabia the desert are in a continual fear of being buried in huge heaps of sand, and therefore dwell in tents and ambulatory houses, or retire to unfruitful mountains, to prolong an uneasy and wilder life. And all the countries round about the Adriatic sea feel such violent convulsions by tempests and intolerable earthquakes, that sometimes whole cities find a tomb, and every man sinks with his own house made ready to become his monument,

and his bed is crushed into the disorders of a grave. Was not all the world drowned at one deluge, and breach of the Divine anger? And shall not all the world again be destroyed by fire? Are there not many thousands that die every night, and that groan and weep sadly every day? But what shall we think of that great evil, which for the sins of men God hath suffered to possess the greatest part of mankind? Most of the men that are now alive, or that have been living for many ages, are Jews, heathens, or Turks; and God was pleased to suffer a base epileptic person, a villain and a vicious, to set up a religion which hath filled all the nearer parts of Asia, and much of Africa, and some part of Europe; so that the greatest number of men and women born in so many kingdoms and provinces are infallibly made Mahometan, strangers and enemies to Christ, by whom alone we can be saved. This consideration is extremely sad, when we remember how universal and how great an evil it is; that so many millions of sons and daughters are born to enter into the possession of devils to eternal ages. These evils are the miseries of great parts of mankind, and we cannot easily consider more particularly the evils which happen to us, being the inseparable affections or incidents to the whole nature of man.

2. We find that all the women in the world are either born for barrenness, or the pains of childbirth, and yet this is one of our greatest blessings; but such indeed are the blessings of this world, we cannot be well with, nor without many things. Perfumes make our heads ache, roses prick our fingers, and in our very blood, where our life dwells, is the scene under which nature acts many sharp fevers and heavy sicknesses. It were too sad, if I should tell how many persons are afflicted with evil spirits, with spectres and illusions of the night; and that huge multitudes of men and women live upon man's flesh; nay, worse yet, upon the sins of men, upon the sins of their sons and of their daughters, and they pay their souls down for the bread they eat, buying this day's meal with the price of the last night's sin.

3. Or if you please in charity to visit an hospital, which is indeed a map of the whole world, there you shall see the effects of Adam's sin, and the ruins of human nature; bodies laid up in heaps like the bones of a destroyed town, men whose souls seem to be borrowed, and are kept there by art and the force of medicine, whose miseries are so great, that few people have charity or humanity enough to visit them, fewer have the heart to dress them, and we pity them in civility or with a transient prayer, but we do not feel their sorrows by the mercies of a religious pity; and therefore as we leave their sorrows in many degrees unrelieved and un eased, so we contract, by our unmercifulness, a guilt by which ourselves become liable to the same calamities. Those many that need pity, and those infinities of people that refuse to pity, are miserable upon a several charge, but yet they almost make up all mankind.

4. All wicked men are in love with that which entangles them in huge varieties of troubles; they are slaves to the worst of masters, to sin and to the devil, to a passion, and to an imperious woman. Good men are for ever persecuted, and God chastises every son whom he receives, and whatsoever is easy, is trifling and worth nothing, and whatsoever is excellent, is not to be obtained without labour and sorrow; and the conditions and states of men, that are free from great cares, are such as have in them nothing rich and orderly, and those that have, are stuck full of thorns and trouble.

Kings are full of care ; and learned men in all ages have been observed to be very poor,—they complain of their honest miseries.

5. But these evils are notorious and confessed ; even they also whose felicity men stare at and admire, besides their splendour and the sharpness of their light, will, with their appendant sorrows, wring a tear from the most resolved eye ; for not only the winter quarter is full of storms and cold and darkness, but the beauteous spring hath blasts and sharp frosts, the fruitful teeming summer is melted with heat, and burned with the kisses of the sun her friend, and choked with dust ; and the rich autumn is full of sickness ; and we are weary of that, which we enjoy, because sorrow is its biggest portion : and when we remember, that upon the fairest face is placed one of the worst sinks of the body, the nose, we may use it not only as a mortification to the pride of beauty, but as an allay to the fairest outside of condition which any of the sons and daughters of Adam do possess. For look upon kings and conquerors : I will not tell, that many of them fall into the condition of servants, and their subjects rule over them, and stand upon the ruins of their families, and that to such persons the sorrow is bigger, than usually happens in smaller fortunes : but let us suppose them still conquerors, and see what a goodly purchase they get by all their pains, and amazing fears, and continual dangers. They carry their arms beyond the Ister, and pass the Euphrates, and bind the Germans with the bounds of the river Rhine : I speak in the style of the Roman greatness ; for now-a-days the biggest fortune swells not beyond the limits of a petty province or two, and a hill confines the progress of their prosperity, or a river checks it : but whatsoever tempts the pride and vanity of ambitious persons, is not so big as the smallest star, which we see scattered in disorder and unregarded upon the pavement and floor of heaven. And if we would suppose the pismires had but our understandings, they also would have the method of a man's greatness, and divide their little mole-hills into provinces and exarchates : and if they also grew as vicious and as miserable, one of their princes would lead an army out, and kill his neighbour ants, that he might reign over the next handful of a turf. But then, if we consider at what price and with what felicity all this is purchased, the sting of the painted snake will quickly appear, and the fairest of their fortunes will properly enter into this account of human infelicities.

We may guess at it by the constitution of Augustus's fortune, who struggled for his power, first, with the Roman citizens, then with Brutus and Cassius, and all the fortune of the republic ; then with his colleague Mark Antony ; then with his kindred and nearest relatives, and, after he was wearied with slaughter of the Romans, before he could sit down and rest in his imperial chair, he was forced to carry armies into Macedonia, Galatia, beyond the Euphrates, Rhine, and Danubius ; and when he dwelt at home in greatness and within the circles of a mighty power, he hardly escaped the sword of the Egnatii, of Lepidus, Cæpio, and Muræna ; and after he had entirely reduced the felicity and grandeur into his own family, his daughter, his only child, conspired with many of the young nobility, and being joined with adulterous complications as with an impious sacrament, they affrighted and destroyed the fortunes of the old man, and wrought him more sorrow than all the troubles that were hatched in the baths and beds of Egypt, between Antony and Cleopatra. This was the greatest fortune that the world had then or ever since, and therefore we cannot expect it to be better in a less prosperity.

6. The prosperity of this world is so infinitely soured with the overflowing of evils, that he is counted the most happy who hath the fewest ; all conditions being evil and miserable, they are only distinguished by the number of calamities. The collector of the Roman and foreign examples, when he had reckoned two-and-twenty instances of great fortunes, every one of which had been allayed with great variety of evils ; in all his reading or experience, he could tell but of two who had been famed for an entire prosperity. Quintus Metellus, and Gyges the king of Lydia : and yet concerning the one of them he tells, that his felicity was so inconsiderable (and yet it was the bigger of the two) that the oracle said, that Aglaus Sophidius the poor Arcadian shepherd, was more happy than he, that is, he had fewer troubles ; for so indeed we are to reckon the pleasures of this life ; the limit of our joy is the absence of some degree of sorrow, and he that hath the least of this, is the most prosperous person. But then we must look for prosperity, not in palaces or courts of princes, not in the tents of conquerors, or in the gayeties of fortunate and prevailing sinners ; but something rather in the cottages of honest, innocent, and contented persons, whose mind is no bigger than their fortune, nor their virtue less than their security. As for others, whose fortune looks bigger, and allures fools to follow it like the wandering fires of the night, till they run into rivers, or are broken upon rocks with staring and running after them, they are all in the condition of Marius, than whose condition nothing was more constant, and nothing more mutable ;—if we reckon them amongst the happy, they are the most happy men ; if we reckon them amongst the miserable, they are the most miserable. For just as is a man's condition, great or little, so is the state of his misery ; all have their share ; but kings and princes, great generals and consuls, rich men and mighty, as they have the biggest business and the biggest charge, and are answerable to God for the greatest accounts, so they have the biggest trouble ; that the uneasiness of their appendage may divide the good and evil of the world, making the poor man's fortune as eligible as the greatest ; and also restraining the vanity of man's spirit, which a great fortune is apt to swell from a vapour to a bubble ; but God in mercy hath mingled wormwood with their wine, and so restrained the drunkenness and follies of prosperity.

7. Man never hath one day to himself of entire peace from the things of the world, but either something troubles him, or nothing satisfies him, or his very fulness swells him and makes him breathe short upon his bed. Men's joys are troublesome ; and besides that the fear of losing them takes away the present pleasure (and a man hath need of another felicity to preserve this), they are also wavering and full of trepidation, not only from their inconstant nature, but from their weak foundation : they arise from vanity, and they dwell upon ice, and they converse with the wind, and they have the wings of a bird, and are serious but as the resolutions of a child, commenced by chance, and managed by folly, and proceed by inadvertency, and end in vanity and forgetfulness. So that as Livius Drusus said of himself, he never had any play-days or days of quiet when he was a boy ; for he was troublesome and busy, a restless and unquiet man : the same may every man observe to be true of himself ; he is always restless and uneasy ; he dwells upon the waters, and leans upon thorns, and lays his head upon a sharp stone.

THE CONSIDERATION REDUCED TO PRACTICE.

1. THE effect of this consideration is this, that the sadnesses of this life help to sweeten the bitter cup of death. For let our life be ever so long, if our strength were great as that of oxen and camels, if our sinews were strong as the cordage at the foot of an oak, if we were as fighting and prosperous people as Siccus Dentatus, who was on the prevailing side in a hundred and twenty battles, who had three hundred and twelve public rewards assigned him by his generals and princes, for his valour and conduct in sieges and sharp encounters, and, besides all this, had his share in nine triumphs; yet still the period shall be, that all this shall end in death, and the people shall talk of us awhile, good or bad, according as we deserve, or as they please; and once it shall come to pass, that concerning every one of us it shall be told in the neighbourhood, that we are dead. This we are apt to think a sad story; but therefore let us help it with a sadder: for we therefore need not be much troubled, that we shall die, because we are not here in ease, nor do we dwell in a fair condition; but our days are full of sorrow and anguish, dishonoured, and made unhappy with many sins, with a frail and a foolish spirit, entangled with difficult cases of conscience, ensnared with passions, amazed with fears, full of cares, divided with curiosities and contradictory interests, made airy and impertinent with vanities, abused with ignorance and prodigious errors, made ridiculous with a thousand weaknesses, worn away with labours, laden with diseases, daily vexed with dangers and temptations, and in love with misery; we are weakened with delights, afflicted with want, with the evils of myself and of all my family, and with the sadnesses of all my friends, and of all good men, even of the whole church; and therefore methinks we need not be troubled, that God is pleased to put an end to all these troubles, and to let them sit down in a natural period, which, if we please, may be to us the beginning of a better life. When the prince of Persia wept because his army should all die in the revolution of an age, Artabanus told him, that they should all meet with evils so many and so great, that every man of them should wish himself dead long before that. Indeed it were a sad thing to be cut for the stone, and we that are in health tremble to think of it; but the man that is wearied with the disease, looks upon that sharpness as upon his cure and remedy: and as none need to have a tooth drawn, so none could well endure it, but he that felt the pain of it in his head: so is our life so full of evils; that therefore death is no evil to them that have felt the smart of this, or hope for the joys of a better.

2. But as it helps to ease a certain sorrow, as a fire draws out fire, and a nail drives forth a nail, so it instructs us in a present duty; that is, that we should not be so fond of a perpetual storm, nor doat upon the transient gauds and gilded thorns of this world. They are not worth a passion, nor worth a sigh or a groan, nor of the price of one night's watching; and therefore they are mistaken and miserable persons, who, since Adam planted thorns round about Paradise, are more in love with that hedge than all the fruits of the garden, sottish admirers of things that hurt them, of sweet poisons, gilded daggers; and silken halters. Tell them they have lost a bounteous friend, a rich purchase, a fair farm, a wealthy donative, and you dissolve their patience: it is an evil bigger than their spirit can bear: it

brings sickness and death ; they can neither eat nor sleep with such a sorrow. But if you represent to them the evils of a vicious habit, and the dangers of a state of sin ; if you tell them they have displeased God, and interrupted their hopes of heaven ; it may be they will be so civil as to hear it patiently, and to treat you kindly, and first to recommend, and then forget your story, because they prefer this world with all its sorrows before the pure unmingled felicities of heaven. But it is strange, that any man should be so passionately in love with the thorns, which grow on his own ground, that he should wear them for armlets, and knit them in his shirt, and prefer them before a kingdom and immortality. No man loves this world the better for his being poor ; but men that love it, because they have great possessions, love it because it is troublesome and chargeable, full of noise and temptation, because it is unsafe and ungoverned, flattered and abused ; and he that considers the troubles of an over-long garment and of a crammed stomach, a trailing gown and a loaden table, may justly understand, that all that for which men are so passionate, is their hurt, and their objection, that which a temperate man would avoid, and a wise man cannot love.

He that is no fool, but can consider wisely, if he be in love with this world, we need not despair ; but that a witty man might reconcile him with tortures, and make him think charitably of the rack, and be brought to dwell with vipers and dragons, and entertain his guests with the shrieks of hyenas, cats, and screech-owls, with the filing of iron, and the harshness of rending of silk, or to admire the harmony, that is made by a herd of evening wolves, when they miss their draught of blood in their midnight revels. The groans of a man in a fit of the stone are worse than all these ; and the distractions of a troubled conscience are worse than those groans ; and yet a careless merry sinner is worse than all that. But if we could, from one of the battlements of heaven, espy how many men and women at this time lie fainting and dying for want of bread, how many young men are hewn down by the sword of war, how many poor orphans are now weeping over the graves of their father, by whose life they were enabled to eat : if we could but hear how many mariners and passengers are at this present in a storm, and shriek out because their keel dashes against a rock, or bulges under them, how many people there are that weep with want, and are mad with oppression, or are desperate by too quick a sense of a constant infelicity ; in all reason we should be glad to be out of the noise and participation of so many evils. This is a place of sorrows and tears, of great evils and a constant calamity : let us remove from hence, at least in afflictions and preparation of mind.

THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED.

To this purpose I shall represent the state of dying and dead men in the devout words of some of the fathers of the church, whose sense I shall exactly keep, but change their order : that by placing some of their dispersed meditations into a chain or sequel of discourse, I may, with their precious

stones, make a union, and compose them into a jewel; for though the meditation is plain and easy, yet it is affectionate, and material, and true, and necessary.

When the sentence of death is decreed, and begins to be put in execution, it is sorrow enough to see or feel respectively the sad accents of the agony and last contentions of the soul, and the reluctances and unwillingnesses of the body: the forehead washed with a new and stranger baptism, besmeared with a cold sweat, tenacious and clammy, apt to make it cleave to the roof of his coffin; the nose cold and undiscerning, not pleased with perfumes, nor suffering violence with a cloud of unwholesome smoke; the eyes dim as a sullied mirror, or the face of heaven when God shows his anger in a prodigious storm; the feet cold, the hands stiff, the physicians despairing, our friends weeping, the rooms dressed with darkness and sorrow, and the exterior parts betraying what are the violences which the soul and spirit suffer; the nobler part, like the lord of the house, being assaulted by exterior rudenesses, and driven from all the outworks, at last faint and weary with short and frequent breathings, interrupted with the longer accents of sighs, without moisture but the excrescences of a spilt humour, when the pitcher is broken at the cistern, it retires to its last fort, the heart; whither it is pursued, and stormed, and beaten out, as when the barbarous Thracian sacked the glory of the Grecian empire. Then calamity is great and sorrow rules in all the capacities of man: then the mourners weep because it is civil, or because they need thee, or because they fear: but who suffers for thee with a compassion sharp as is thy pain? Then the noise is like the faint echo of a distant valley, and few hear, and they will not regard thee, who seemest like a person void of understanding and of a departing interest. But these accidents are common to all that die; and when a special Providence shall distinguish them, they shall die with easy circumstances; but as no piety can secure it, so must no confidence expect it; but wait for the time, and accept the manner of the dissolution. But that which distinguishes them, is this:

He that hath lived a wicked life, if his conscience be alarmed, and that he does not die like a wolf or a tiger, without sense or remorse of all his wildness and his injury, his beastly nature, and desert and untitled manners, if he have but sense of what he is going to suffer, or what he may expect to be his portion; then we may imagine the terror of their abused fancies, how they see affrighting shapes, and because they fear them, they feel the gripes of devils urging the unwilling souls from their kinder and fast embraces of the body, calling to the grave and hastening to judgment, exhibiting great bills of uncanceled crimes, awaking and amazing the conscience, breaking all their hopes in pieces, and making faith useless and terrible, because the malice was great, and the charity was none at all. Then they look for some to have pity on them, but there is no man. No man dares be their pledge: no man can redeem their soul, which now feels what it never feared. Then the tremblings and the sorrow, the memory of the past sin, and the fear of future pains, and the sense of an angry God, and the presence of some devils, consign him to the eternal company of all the damned and accursed spirits. Then they want an angel for their guide, and the Holy Spirit for their comforter, and a good conscience for their testimony, and Christ for their advocate, and they die and are left in prisons of earth or air, in secret and undiscerned regions, to weep and tremble, and infi-

nity to fear the coming of the day of Christ ; at which time they shall be brought forth to change their condition into a worse, where they shall for ever feel more than we can believe or understand.

But when a good man dies, one that hath made joy in heaven at his timely and effective repentance, and in whose behalf the holy Jesus hath interceded prosperously, and for whose interest the Spirit makes interpellations with groans and sighs unutterable, and in whose defence the angels drive away the devils on his deathbed, because his sins are pardoned, and because he resisted the devil in his lifetime, and fought successfully, and persevered unto the end ; then the joys break forth through the clouds of sickness, and the conscience stands upright, and confesses the glories of God, and owns so much integrity, that it can hope for pardon, and obtain it too ; then the sorrows of the sickness, and the flames of the fever, or the faintness of the consumption, do but untie the soul from its chain, and let it go forth, first into liberty, and then to glory : for it is but for a little while that the face of the sky was black, like the preparations of the night, but quickly the cloud was torn and rent, the violence of thunder parted it into little portions, that the sun might look forth with a watery eye, and then shine without a tear. But it is an infinite refreshment to remember all the comforts of his prayers, the frequent victory over his temptations, the mortification of his lust, the noblest sacrifice to God, in which he most delights, that we have given him our wills, and killed our appetites for the interests of his services : then all the trouble of that is gone ; and what remains, is a portion in the inheritance of Jesus, of which he now talks no more as a thing at distance, but is entering into the possession. When the veil is rent, and the prison-doors are open at the presence of God's angel, the soul goes forth full of hope, sometimes with evidence, but always with certainty in the thing, and instantly it passes into the throngs of spirits, where angels meet it singing, and the devils flock with malicious and vile purposes, desiring to lead it away with them into their houses of sorrow : there they see things which they never saw, and hear voices which they never heard. There the devils charge them with many sins, and the angels remember, that themselves rejoiced, when they were repented of. Then the devils aggravate and describe all the circumstances of the sin, and add calumnies ; and the angels bear the soul forward still, because their Lord doth answer for them. Then the devils rage and gnash their teeth ; they see the soul chaste and pure, and they are ashamed ; they see it penitent, and they despair ; they perceive that the tongue was refrained and sanctified, and then hold their peace. Then the soul passes forth and rejoices, passing by the devils in scorn and triumph, being securely carried into the bosom of the Lord, where they shall rest, till their crowns are finished, and their mansions are prepared ; and then they shall feast and sing, rejoice and worship, for ever and ever. Fearful and formidable to unholy persons is the first meeting with spirits in their separation. But the victory which holy souls receive by the mercies of Jesus Christ and the conduct of angels, is a joy that we must not understand till we feel it ; and yet such as by an early and a persevering piety we may secure : but let us inquire after it no further, because it is secret.

ADVANTAGES OF SICKNESS.

1. I CONSIDER one of the greatest felicities of heaven consists in an immunity from sin : then we shall love God without mixtures of malice : then we shall enjoy without envy : then we shall see fuller vessels running over with glory, and crowned with bigger circles ; and this we shall behold without spilling from our eyes (those vessels of joy and grief) any sign of anger, trouble, or a repining spirit : our passions shall be pure, our charity without fear, our desire without lust, our possessions all our own ; and all in the inheritance of Jesus, in the richest soil of God's eternal kingdom. Now half of this reason, which makes heaven so happy by being innocent, is also in the state of sickness, making the sorrows of old age smooth, and the groans of a sick heart apt to be joined to the music of angels : and, though they sound harsh to our untuned ears and discomposed organs ; yet those accents must needs be in themselves excellent, which God loves to hear, and esteems them as prayers and arguments of pity, instruments of mercy and grace, and preparatives to glory.

In sickness, the soul begins to dress herself for immortality. And first, she unites the strings of vanity, that made her upper garment cleave to the world and sit uneasy : first she puts off the light and fantastic summer robe of lust and wanton appetite : and as soon as that cestus, that lascivious girdle, is thrown away, then the reins chasten us, and give us warning in the night ; then that which called us formerly to serve the manliness of the body, and the childishness of the soul, keeps us waking, to divide the hours with the intervals of prayer, and to number the minutes with our penitential groans ; then the flesh sits uneasily, and dwells in sorrow ; and then the spirit feels itself at ease, freed from the petulant solicitations of those passions, which in health were as busy and as restless as atoms in the sun, always dancing, and always busy, and never sitting down, till a sad night of grief and uneasiness draws the veil, and lets them die alone in secret dishonour.

2. Next to this ; the soul by the help of sickness knocks off the fetters of pride and vainer complacencies. Then she draws the curtains, and stops the light from coming in, and takes the pictures down, those fantastic images of self love, and gay remembrances of vain opinion, and popular noises. Then the spirit stoops into the sobrieties of humble thoughts, and feels corruption chiding the forwardness of fancy, and allaying the vapours of conceit and factious opinions. For humility is the soul's grave, into which she enters, not to die, but to meditate and inter some of its troublesome appendages. There she sees the dust, and feels the dishonours of the body, and reads the register of all its sad adherences ; and then she lays by all her vain reflections, beating upon her crystal and pure mirror from the fancies of strength and beauty, and little decayed prettinesses of the body. And when in sickness, we forget all our knotty discourses of philosophy, and a syllogism makes our head ache, and we feel our many and loud talkings served no lasting end of the soul, no purpose that now we must abide by, and that the body is like to descend to the land where all things are forgotten ; then she lays aside all her remembrances of applauses, all her ignorant confidences, and cares only to know " Christ Jesus and him crucified," to

know him plainly, and with much heartiness and simplicity. And I cannot think this to be a contemptible advantage. For ever since man tempted himself by his impatient desires of knowing, and being as God, man thinks it the finest thing in the world to know much, and therefore is hugely apt to esteem himself better than his brethren, if he knows some little impertinences, and them imperfectly, and that with infinite uncertainty : but God hath been pleased, with a rare art, to prevent the inconveniences apt to arise by this passionate longing after knowledge, even by giving to every man a sufficient opinion of his own understanding : and who is there in the world, that thinks himself to be a fool, or indeed not fit to govern his brother ? There are but few men but they think they are wise enough ; and every man believes his own opinion the soundest ; and, if it were otherwise, men would burst themselves with envy, or else become irrecoverable slaves to the talking and disputing man. But when God intended this permission to be an antidote of envy, and a satisfaction and allay to the troublesome appetites of knowing, and made, that this universal opinion, by making men in some proportions equal, should be a keeper out or a great restraint to slavery and tyranny respectively ; man (for so he uses to do) hath turned this into bitterness : for when nature had made so just a distribution of understanding, that every man might think he had enough, he is not content with that, but will think he hath more than his brother : and whereas it might well be employed in restraining slavery, he hath used it to break off the bands of all obedience, and it ends in pride and schisms, in heresies and tyrannies ; and it being a spiritual evil, it grows upon the soul with old age and flattery, with health and the supports of a prosperous fortune. Now, besides the direct operations of the Spirit, and a powerful grace, there is, in nature, left to us no remedy for this evil, but a sharp sickness, or an equal sorrow, and allay of fortune : and then we are humble enough to ask counsel of a despised priest, and to think, that even a common sentence from the mouth of an appointed comforter, streams forth more refreshment than all our own wiser and more reputed discourses : then our understandings and our bodies, peeping through their own breaches, see their shame and their dishonour, their dangerous follies and their huge deceptions ; and they go into the clefts of the rock, and every little hand may cover them.

3. Next to these, as the soul is still undressing, she takes off the roughness of her great and little angers and animosities, and receives the oil of mercies and smooth forgiveness, fair interpretations and gentle answers, designs of reconciliation and Christian atonement in their places. For so did the wrestlers in Olympus, they stripped themselves of all their garments, and then anointed their naked bodies with oil smooth and vigorous ; with contracted nerves and enlarged voice they contended vehemently, till they obtained their victory, or their ease ; and a crown of olive, or a huge pity, was the reward of their fierce contentions. Some wise men have said, that anger sticks to a man's nature as inseparably as other vices do to the manners of fools, and that anger is never quite cured : but God, that hath found out remedies for all diseases, hath so ordered the circumstances of man, that, in the worse sort of men, anger and great indignation consume and shrivel into little peevishnesses and uneasy accents of sickness, and spent themselves in trifling instances ; and, in the better and more sanctified, it goes off in prayers, and alms, and solemn reconciliation. And however the temptations of this state, such I mean, which are pro-

per to it, are little and inconsiderable; the man is apt to chide a servant too bitterly, and to be discontented with his nurse, or not satisfied with his physician, and he rests uneasily, and (poor man!) nothing can please him: and indeed these little indecencies must be cured and stopped, lest they run into an inconvenience. But sickness is, in this particular, a little image of the state of blessed souls, or of Adam's early morning in Paradise, free from the troubles of lust, and violences of anger, and the intricacies of ambition, or the restlessness of covetousness. For though a man may carry all these along with him into his sickness, yet there he will not find them; and in despite of all his own malice, his soul shall find some rest from labouring in the galleys, and baser captivity of sin: and if we value those moments of being in the love of God and in the kingdom of grace, which certainly are the beginnings of felicity, we may also remember, that the not sinning actually is one step of innocence; and therefore that state is not intolerable, which, by a sensible trouble, makes it in most instances impossible to commit those great sins, which make death, hell, and horrid damnations. And then let us but add this to it, that God sends sicknesses, but he never causes sin; that God is angry with a sinning person, but never with a man for being sick; that sin causes God to hate us, and sickness causes him to pity us; that all wise men in the world choose trouble rather than dishonour, affliction rather than baseness; and that sickness stops the torrent of sin, and interrupts its violence, and even to the worst men makes it to retreat many degrees. We may reckon sickness amongst good things, as we reckon rhubarb, and aloes, and child-birth, and labour, and obedience, and discipline: these are unpleasant, and yet safe; they are troubles in order to blessings, or they are securities from danger, or the hard choices of a less and a more tolerable evil.

4. Sickness is, in some sense, eligible, because it is the opportunity and the proper scene of exercising some virtues. It is that agony, in which men are tried for a crown. And if we remember what glorious things are spoken of the grace of faith, that it is the life of just men, the restitution of the dead in trespasses and sins, the justification of a sinner, the support of the weak, the confidence of the strong, the magazine of promises, and the title to very glorious rewards; we may easily imagine, that it must have in it a work and a difficulty, in some proportion answerable to so great effects. But when we are bidden to believe strange propositions, we are put upon it, when we cannot judge, and those propositions have possessed our discerning faculties, and have made a party there, and are become domestic, before they come to be disputed; and then the articles of faith are so few, and are made so credible, and, in their event and in their object, are so useful and gaining upon the affections, that he were a prodigy of man, and would be so esteemed, that should, in all our present circumstances, disbelieve any point of faith: and all is well as long as the sun shines, and the fair breath of heaven gently wafts us to our own purposes. But if you will try the excellency, and feel the work of faith, place the man in a persecution; let him ride in a storm; let his bones be broken with sorrow, and his eyelids loosened with sickness: let his bread be dipped in tears, and all the daughters of music be brought low; let God commence a quarrel against him, and be bitter in the accents of his anger or his discipline; then God tries your faith. Can you then trust his goodness; and believe him to be a father, when you groan under his rod? Can you rely upon

all the strange propositions of Scripture, and be content to perish, if they be not true? Can you receive comfort in the discourses of death and heaven, of immortality and the resurrection, of the death of Christ and conforming to his sufferings? Truth is, there are but two great periods, in which faith demonstrates itself to be a powerful and mighty grace: and they are persecution and the approaches of death, for the passive part; and a temptation, for the active. In the days of pleasure and the night of pain, faith is to fight her *agonisticon*, to contend for mastery: and faith overcomes all alluring and fond temptations to sin, and faith overcomes all our weaknesses and faintings in our troubles. By the faith of the promises, we learn to despise the world, choosing those objects which faith discovers: and, by expectation of the same promises, we are comforted in all our sorrows, and enabled to look through and see beyond the cloud: but the vigour of it is pressed and called forth, when all our fine discourses come to be reduced to practice. For in our health and clearer days it is easy to talk of putting trust in God; we readily trust him for life, when we are in health; for provisions, when we have fair revenues; and for deliverance, when we are newly escaped: but let us come to sit upon the margent of our grave, and let a tyrant lean hard upon our fortunes, and dwell upon our wrong; let the storm arise, and the keels toss till the cordage crack, or that all our hopes bulge under us, and descend into the hollowness of sad misfortunes; then can you believe, when you neither hear, nor see, nor feel any thing but objections? This is the proper work of sickness: faith is then brought into the theatre; and so exercised, that if it abides but to the end of the contention, we may see the work of faith, which God will hugely crown. The same I say of hope, and of charity, or the love of God, and of patience, which is a grace produced from the mixtures of all these: they are virtues, which are greedy of danger, and no man was ever honoured by any wise or discerning person for dining upon Persian carpets, nor rewarded with a crown for being at ease. It was the fire that did honour to Mutius Scævola; poverty made Fabricius famous: Rutilius was made excellent by banishment; Regulus by torments; Socrates by prison; and God hath crowned the memory of Job with a wreath of glory, because he sat upon his dunghill wisely and temperately; and his potsherd and his groans, mingled with praises and justifications of God, pleased him like an anthem, sung by angels in the morning of the resurrection. God could not choose but be pleased with the delicious accents of martyrs, when in their tortures they cried out nothing but “Holy Jesus” and “Blessed be God;” and they also themselves, who, with a hearty designation to the Divine pleasure, can delight in God’s severe dispensation, will have the transportations of cherubim, when they enter into the joys of God. If God be delicious to his servants, when he smites them, he will be nothing but ravishments and ecstasies to their spirits, when he refreshes them with the overflowings of joy in the day of recompenses. No man is more miserable, than he that hath no adversity; that man is not tried, whether he be good or bad: and God never crowns those virtues, which are only faculties and dispositions: but every act of virtue is an ingredient into reward. And we see many children fairly planted, whose parts of nature were never dressed by art, nor called from the furrows of their first possibilities by discipline and institution, and they dwell for ever in ignorance, and converse with beasts; and yet if they had been dressed and exercised, might have stood at the chairs of prin-

ces, or spoken parables amongst the rulers of cities. Our virtues are but in the seed when the grace of God comes upon us first: but this grace must be thrown into broken furrows, and must twice feel the cold, and twice feel the heat, and be softened with storms and showers, and then it will arise into fruitfulness and harvests. And what is there in the world to distinguish virtues from dishonours, or the valour of Cæsar from the softness of the Egyptian eunuchs, or that can make any thing rewardable, but the labour and the danger, the pain and the difficulty? Virtue could not be any thing but sensuality, if it were the entertainment of our senses and fond desires; and Apicius had been the noblest of all the Romans, if feeding a great appetite and despising the severities of temperance had been the work and proper employment of a wise man. But otherwise do fathers, and otherwise do mothers handle their children. These soften them with kisses and imperfect noises, with the pap and breast-milk of soft endearments; they rescue them from tutors, and snatch them from discipline; they desire to keep them fat and warm, and their feet dry, and their bellies full; and then the children govern, and cry, and prove fools and troublesome, so long as the feminine republic does endure. But fathers, because they design to have their children wise and valiant, apt for counsel or for arms, send them to severe governments, and tie them to study, to hard labour, and afflictive contingencies. They rejoice, when the bold boy strikes a lion with his hunting spear, and shrinks not when the beast comes to affright his early courage. Softness is for slaves and beasts, for minstrels and useless persons, for such who cannot ascend higher than the state of a fair ox, or a servant entertained for vainer offices: but the man, that designs his son for noble employments, to honours and to triumphs, to consular dignities and presidencies of councils, loves to see him pale with study, or panting with labour, hardened with sufferance, or eminent by dangers. And so God dresses us for heaven. He loves to see us struggling with a disease, and resisting the devil, and contesting against the weaknesses of nature, and against hope to believe in hope, resigning ourselves to God's will, praying him to choose for us, and dying in all things but faith and its blessed consequences; and the danger and the resistance shall endear the office. For so I have known the boisterous north wind pass through the yielding air, which opened its bosom, and appeased its violence by entertaining it with easy compliance in all the regions of its reception: but when the same breath of heaven hath been checked with the stiffness of a tower, for the united strength of wood, it grew mighty, and dwelt there, and made the highest branches stoop, and make a smooth path for it on the top of all its glories. So is sickness, and so is the grace of God: when sickness hath made the difficulty, then God's grace hath made a triumph, and by doubling its power hath created new proportions of a reward; and then shows its biggest glory, when it hath the greatest difficulty to master, the greatest weaknesses to support, the most busy temptations to contest with; for so God loves, that his strength should be seen in our weakness and our danger. Happy is that state of life, in which our services to God are the dearest and the most expensive.

5. Sickness hath some degrees of eligibility, at least by an after-choice; because God very often smites with his rod of sickness, that he may not for ever be slaying the soul with eternal death. "I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges: nevertheless my loving-kindness

will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail.”* And there is, in the New Testament, a delivering over to Satan, and a consequent buffeting, for the mortification of the flesh indeed, but that the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord. And to some persons the utmost process of God’s anger reaches but to a sharp sickness, or at most but to a temporal death; and then the little momentary anger is spent and expires in rest and a quiet grave. Origen, St Augustine, and Cassian say, concerning Ananias and Sapphira, that they were slain with a sudden death, that by such a judgment their sin might be punished, and their guilt expiated, and their persons reserved for mercy in the day of judgment. And God cuts off many of his children from the land of the living; and yet, when they are numbered amongst the dead, he finds them in the book of life, written amongst those that shall live to him for ever. And thus it happened to many new Christians, in the church of Corinth, for their little indecencies and disorders in the circumstances of receiving the holy sacrament. St Paul says, that “many amongst them were sick, many were weak, and some were fallen asleep.”† And therefore St Augustine prayed to God in his penitential sorrows, “Here, O Lord, burn and cut my flesh, that thou mayest spare me for ever.” For so said our blessed Saviour, “Every sacrifice must be seasoned with salt, and every sacrifice must be burnt with fire;” that is, we must abide in the state of grace; and, if we have committed sins, we must expect to be put into the state of affliction; and yet the sacrifice will send up a bright, and untroubled cloud, and a sweet smell to join with the incense of the altar, where the eternal Priest offers a never-ceasing sacrifice. And now I have said a thing, against which there can be no exceptions, and of which no just reason can make abatement. For when sickness, which is the condition of our nature, is called for with purposes of redemption; when we are sent to death to secure eternal life; when God strikes us, that he may spare us, it shows, that we have done things which he essentially hates; and therefore we must be smitten with the rod of God: but, in the midst of judgment, God remembers mercy, and makes the rod to be medicinal, and, like the rod of God in the hand of Aaron, to shoot forth buds and leaves, and almonds, hopes and mercies, and eternal recompences, in the day of restitution. This is so great a good to us, if it be well conducted in all the channels of its intention and design, that if we had put off the objections of the flesh, with abstractions, contempts, and separations, so as we ought to do, it were as earnestly to be prayed for as any gay blessing, that crowns our cups with joy, and our heads with garlands and forgetfulness. But this was it which I said; that this may, nay, that it ought to be chosen, at least by an after-election; for so said St Paul, “If we judge ourselves, we shall not be condemned of the Lord:” that is, if we judge ourselves worthy of the sickness, if we acknowledge and confess God’s justice in smiting us, if we take the rod of God in our own hands, and are willing to imprint it in the flesh, we are workers together with God in the infliction; and then the sickness, beginning and being managed in the virtue of repentance, and patience, and resignation, and charity, will end in peace, and pardon, and justification, and consignation to glory. That I have spoken truth, I have brought God’s Spirit speaking in Scripture for a witness. But if this be true, there are

* Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33.

† 1 Cor. xi. 30.

not many states of life that have advantages, which can outweigh this great instrument of security to our final condition. Moses died at the mouth of the Lord, said the story; he died with the kisses of the Lord's mouth (so the Chaldee paraphrase): it was the greatest act of kindness that God did to his servant Moses; he kissed him, and he died. But I have some things to observe for the better finishing this consideration.

1. All these advantages and lessenings of evils in the state of sickness are only upon the stock of virtue and religion. There is nothing can make sickness in any sense eligible, or in many senses tolerable, but only the grace of God: that only turns sickness into easiness and felicity, which also turns it into virtue. For whosoever goes about to comfort a vicious person, when he lies sick upon his bed, can only discourse of the necessities of nature, of the unavoidableness of the suffering, of the accidental vexations and increase of torments by impatience, of the fellowship of all the sons of Adam, and such other little considerations; which indeed, if sadly reflected upon, and found to stand alone, teach him nothing but the degree of his calamity, and the evil of his condition, and teach him such a patience, and minister to him such a comfort, which can only make him to observe decent gestures in his sickness, and to converse with his friends and standers-by so as may do them comfort, and ease their funeral and civil complaints; but do him no true advantage: for, all that may be spoken to a beast when he is crowned with hair-laces, and bound with fillets to the altar, to bleed to death to appease the anger of the Deity, and to ease the burden of his relatives. And indeed what comfort can he receive, whose sickness, as it looks back, is an effect of God's indignation and fierce vengeance, and if it goes forward and enters into the gates of the grave, is the beginning of a sorrow, that shall never have an ending? But when the sickness is a messenger sent from a chastising Father; when it first turns into degrees of innocence, and then into virtues, and thence into pardon; this is no misery, but such a method of the divine economy and dispensation as resolves to bring us to heaven without any new impositions, but merely upon the stock and charges of nature.

2. It were good, if we would transact the affairs of our souls with nobleness and ingenuity, and that we would, by an early and forward religion, prevent the necessary arts of the divine providence. It is true, that God cures some by incision, by fire and torments; but these are ever the more obstinate and more unrelenting natures. God's providence is not so afflictive and full of trouble, as that it hath placed sickness and infirmity amongst things simply necessary; and, in most persons, it is but a sickly and an effeminate virtue, which is imprinted upon our spirits with fears, and the sorrows of a fever, or a peevish consumption. It is but a miserable remedy to be beholden to a sickness for our health: and though it be better to suffer the loss of a finger, than that the arm and the whole body should putrefy; yet even then also it is a trouble and an evil to lose a finger. He that mends with sickness, pares the nails of the beast, when they have already torn off part of the flesh: but he that would have a sickness become a clear and an entire blessing, a thing indeed to be reckoned among the good things of God and the evil things of the world, must lead a holy life, and judge himself with an early sentence, and so order the affairs of his soul, that, in the usual method of God's saving us, there may be nothing left to be done, but that such virtues should be exercised, which God intends to

crown : and then, as when the Athenians upon a day of battle with longing and uncertain souls sitting in their common-hall, expecting what would be the sentence of the day, at last received a messenger, who only hath breath enough left him to say, “ We are conquerors,” and so died ; so shall the sick person, who hath “ fought a good fight and kept the faith,” and only waits for his dissolution and his sentence, breathe forth his spirit with the accents of a conqueror, and his sickness and his death shall only make the mercy and the virtue more illustrious.

But for the sickness itself ; if all the calumnies were true concerning it, with which it is aspersed, yet it is far to be preferred before the most pleasant sin, and before a great secular business and a temporal care : and some men wake as much in the foldings of the softest beds, as others on the cross : and sometimes the very weight of sorrow and the weariness of a sickness press the spirit into slumbers and the images of rest, when the intemperate or the lustful person rolls upon his uneasy thorns and sleep is departed from his eyes. Certain it is, some sickness is a blessing. Indeed, blindness were a most accursed thing, if no man were ever blind but he whose eyes were pulled out with tortures or burning basins : and if sickness were always a testimony of God’s anger, and a violence to a man’s whole condition, then it were a huge calamity : but because God sends it to his servants, to his children, to little infants, to apostles and saints, with designs of mercy, to preserve their innocence, to overcome temptation, to try their virtue, to fit them for rewards ; it is certain that sickness never is an evil but by our own faults : and if we will do our duty, we shall be sure to turn it into a blessing. If the sickness be great, it may end in death, and the greater it is, the sooner : and if it be very little, it hath great intervals of rest : if it be between both, we may be masters of it, and by serving the ends of Providence serve also the perfective end of human nature, and enter into the possession of everlasting mercies.

The sum is this : He that is afraid of pain, is afraid of his own nature ; and if his fear be violent, it is a sign his patience is none at all : and an impatient person is not ready dressed for heaven. None but suffering, humble, and patient persons can go to heaven ; and when God hath given us the whole stage of our life to exercise all the active virtues of religion, it is necessary in the state of virtues, that some portion and period of our lives be assigned to passive graces ; for patience, for Christian fortitude, for resignation, or conformity to the divine will. But as the violent fear of sickness makes us impatient, so it will make our death without comfort and without religion ; and we shall go off from our stage of actions and sufferings with an unhandsome exit, because we were willing to receive the kindness of God, when he expressed it as we listed ; but we would not suffer him to be kind and gracious to us in his own method, nor were willing to exercise and improve our virtues at the charge of a sharp fever, or a lingering consumption. “ Woe be to the man, that hath lost patience ; for what will he do, when the Lord shall visit him ?”

RULES AND EXERCISES WHEREBY OUR SICKNESS MAY
BE SANCTIFIED.

1. TAKE care that the cause of thy sickness be such, as may not sour it in the principal and original causes of it. It is a sad calamity to pass into the house of mourning through the gates of intemperance, by a drunken meeting, or the surfeits of a loathed and luxurious table; for then a man suffers the pain of his own folly, and he is like a fool smarting under the whip, which his own viciousness twisted for his back; then a man pays the price of his sin, and hath a pure and an unmingled sorrow in his suffering; and it cannot be alleviated by any circumstances, for the whole affair is a mere process of death and sorrow. Sin is in the head, sickness is in the body, and death and an eternity of pains in the tail; and nothing can make this condition tolerable, unless the miracles of the divine mercy will be pleased to exchange the eternal anger for the temporal. True it is, that, in all sufferings, the cause of it makes it noble or ignoble, honour or shame, tolerable or intolerable. For when patience is assaulted by a ruder violence, by a blow from heaven or earth, from a gracious God or an unjust man, patience looks forth to the doors, which way she may escape. And if innocence or a cause of religion keep the first entrance, then, whether she escapes at the gates of life or death, there is a good to be received, greater than the evils of a sickness: but if sin thrust in that sickness, and that hell stands at the door, then patience turns into fury, and seeing it impossible to go forth with safety, rolls up and down with a circular and infinite revolution, makes its motion not from, but upon, its own centre; it doubles the pain, and increases the sorrow, till by its weight it breaks the spirit, and bursts into the agonies of infinite and eternal ages. If we had seen St Polycarp burning to death, or St Laurence roasted upon his gridiron, or St Ignatius exposed to lions, or St Sebastian pierced with arrows, or St Attalus carried about the theatre with scorn unto his death for the cause of Jesus, for religion, for God and a holy conscience; we should have been in love with flames, and have thought the gridiron fairer than the ribs of a marital bed: and we should have chosen to converse with those beasts, rather those men, that brought those beasts forth; and estimated the arrows to be the rays of light brighter than the moon; and that disgrace and mistaken pageantry were a solemnity richer and more magnificent than Mordecai's procession upon the king's horse, and in the robes of majesty; for so did these holy men account them; they kissed their stakes, and hugged their deaths, and ran violently to torments, and counted whippings and secular disgraces to be the enamel of their persons, and the ointment of their heads, and the embalming their names, and securing them for immortality. But to see Sejanus torn in pieces by the people, or Nero crying or creeping timorously to his death, when he was condemned to die *more majorem*; to see Judas pale and trembling, full of anguish, sorrow, and despair; to observe the groanings and intolerable agonies of Herod and Antiochus, will tell and demonstrate the causes of patience and impatience to proceed from the causes of the suffering: and it is sin only that makes the cup bitter and deadly. When men, by vomiting, measure up the drink

they took in, and sick and sad do again taste their meat turned into choler by intemperance, the sin and its punishment are mingled so, that shame covers the face, and sorrow puts a veil of darkness upon the heart: and we scarce pity a vile person, that is haled to execution for murder or for treason, but we say he deserves it, and that every man is concerned in it, that he should die. If lust brought the sickness or the shame, if we truly suffer the rewards of our evil deeds, we must thank ourselves; that is, we are fallen into an evil condition, and are the sacrifice of the divine justice. But if we live holy lives, and if we enter well in, we are sure to pass on safe, and to go forth with advantage, if we list ourselves.

2. To this relates, that we should not counterfeit sickness: for he, that is to be careful of his passage into a sickness, will think himself concerned, that he fall not into it through a trap-door: for so it hath sometimes happened, that such counterfeiting to light and evil purposes hath ended in a real sufferance. Appian tells of a Roman gentleman, who, to escape the proscription of the triumvirate, fled, and to secure his privacy counterfeited himself blind on one eye, and wore a plaster upon it, till, beginning to be free from the malice of the three prevailing princes, he opened his hood, but could not open his eye, but for ever lost the use of it, and with his eye paid for his liberty and hypocrisy. And Cælius counterfeited the gout, and all its circumstances and pains, its dressings and arts of remedy and complaint, till at last the gout really entered and spoiled the pageantry. His arts of dissimulation were so witty, that they put life and motion into the very image of the disease; he made the very picture to sigh and groan.

To Christian simplicity and godly sincerity counterfeiting of sickness is a huge enemy; it is an upbraiding the divine providence, a jesting with fire, a playing with a thunderbolt, a making the decrees of God to serve the vicious or secular ends of men; it is a tempting of a judgment, a false accusation of God, a forestalling and antedating his anger; it is a cozening of men by making God a party in the fraud: and therefore, if the cozenage returns upon the man's own head, he enters like a fox into his sickness, and perceives himself catched in a trap, or earthed in the intolerable dangers of the grave.

3. Although we must be infinitely careful to prevent it, that sin does not thrust us into a sickness; yet when we are in the house of sorrow, we should do well to take physic against sin, and suppose that it is the cause of the evil; if not by way of natural casualty and proper effect, yet by a moral influence, and by a just demerit. We can easily see, when a man hath got a surfeit; intemperance is as plain as the handwriting upon the wall, and easier to be read; but covetousness may cause a fever as well as drunkenness, and pride can produce a falling-sickness as well as long washings and dilutions of the brain, and intemperate lust: and we find it recorded in Scripture, that the contemptuous and unprepared manner of receiving of the holy sacraments caused sickness and death; and sacrilege and vow-breach in Ananias and Sapphira made them to descend quick into their graves. Therefore, when sickness is upon us, let us cast about; and if we can, let us find out the cause of God's displeasure; that, it being removed, we may return into the health and securities of God's loving-kindness. Thus in the three years' famine, David inquired of the Lord, what was the matter: and God answered, "It is for Saul and his bloody house:" and then David expiated the guilt, and the people were full again of food and

blessing. And when Israel was smitten by the Amorites, Joshua cast about, and found out the accursed thing, and cast it out; and the people, after that, fought prosperously. And what God in that case said to Joshua, he will also verify to us; "I will not be with you any more, unless you destroy the accursed thing from among you."* But in pursuance of this we are to observe, that although, in case of loud and clamorous sins, the discovery is easy, and the remedy not difficult; yet because Christianity is a nice thing, and religion is as pure as the sun, and the soul of man is apt to be troubled from more principles than the intricate and curiously composed body in its innumerable parts, it will often happen, that if we go to inquire into the particular, we shall never find it out; and we may suspect drunkenness, when it may be also a morose delectation in unclean thoughts, or covetousness, or oppression, or a crafty invasion of my neighbour's rights, or my want of charity, or my judging unjustly in my own cause, or my censuring my neighbours, or a secret pride, or a base hypocrisy, or the pursuance of little ends with violence and passion, that may have procured the present messenger of death. Therefore ask no more after any one, but heartily endeavour to reform all: "sin no more, lest a worse thing happen:" for a single search or accusation may be the design of an imperfect repentance; but no man does heartily return to God, but he that decrees against every irregularity; and then only we can be restored to health or life, when we have taken away the causes of sickness and a cursed death.

4. He that means to have his sickness turn into safety and life, into health and virtue, must make religion the employment of his sickness, and prayer the employment of his religion. For, besides that it moves God to pity, piercing the clouds, and making the heavens, like a pricked eye, to weep over us, and refresh us with showers of pity; it also doth the work of the soul, and expresses the virtue of his whole life in effigy, in pictures and lively representment, so preparing it for a never-ceasing crown, by renewing the actions in the continuation of a never-ceasing a never-hindered affection. Prayer speaks to God, when the tongue is stiffened with the approachings of death: prayer can dwell in the heart, and be signified by the hand or eye, by a thought or a groan: prayer of all the actions of religion is the last alive, and it serves God without circumstances, and exercises material graces by abstraction from matter, and separation, and makes them to be spiritual; and therefore best dresses our bodies for funeral or recovery, for the mercies of restitution or the mercies of the grave.

5. In every sickness, whether it will, or will not, be so in nature and in the event, yet in thy spirit and preparations resolve upon it, and treat thyself accordingly, as if it were a sickness unto death. For many men support their unequal courages by flattery and false hopes; and because sicker men have recovered, believe, that they shall do so; but therefore they neglect to adorn their souls, or set their house in order: besides the temporal inconveniences that often happen by such persuasions, and putting off the evil day, such as are, dying intestate, leaving estates entangled, and some relatives unprovided for; they suffer infinitely in the interest and affairs of their soul, they die carelessly and surprised, their burdens on, and their scruples unremoved, and their cases of conscience not determined, and, like

* Josh. vii. 12.

a sheep, without any care taken concerning their precious souls. Some men will never believe, that a villain will betray them, though they receive often advices from suspicious persons and likely accidents, till they are entered into the snare; and then they believe it, when they feel it, and when they cannot return: but so the treason entered, and the man was betrayed by his own folly, placing the snare in the regions and advantages of opportunity. This evil looks like boldness and a confident spirit, but it is the greatest timorousness and cowardice in the world. They are so fearful to die, that they dare not look upon it as possible; and think that the making of a will is a mortal sign, and sending for a spiritual man an irrecoverable disease; and they are so afraid, lest they should think and believe now they must die, that they will not take care, that it may not be evil, in case they should. So did the eastern slaves drink wine, and wrapped their heads in a veil, that they might die without sense or sorrow, and wink hard, that they might sleep the easier. In pursuance of this rule, let a man consider, that whatsoever must be done in sickness, ought to be done in health; only let him observe, that his sickness as a good monitor chastises his neglect of duty, and forces him to live as he always should; and then all these solemnities and dressings for death are nothing else but the part of a religious life; which he ought to have exercised all his days; and if those circumstances can affright him, let him please his fancy by this truth, that then he does but begin to live. But it will be a huge folly, if he shall think that confession of his sins will kill him; or receiving the holy sacrament will hasten his agony, or the priest shall undo all the hopeful language and promises of his physician. Assure thyself, thou canst not die the sooner; but, by such addresses, thou mayest die much the better.

6. Let the sick person be infinitely careful, that he do not fall into a state of death upon a new account: that is, at no hand commit a deliberate sin, or retain any affection to the old: for, in both cases, he falls into the evils of a surprise, and the horrors of a sudden death; for a sudden death is but a sudden joy, if it takes a man in the state and exercises of virtue: and it is only then an evil, when it finds a man unready. They were sad departures, when Tigillinus, Cornelius Gallus the pretor, Lewis the son of Gonzaga duke of Mantua, Ladislaus king of Naples, Speusippus, Giachettius of Geneva, and one of the popes, died in the forbidden embraces of abused women; or if Job had cursed God, and so died; or when a man sits down in despair, and in the accusation and calumny of the divine mercy; they make their night sad, and stormy, and eternal. When Herod began to sink with the shameful torment of his bowels, and felt the grave open under him, he imprisoned the nobles of his kingdom, and commanded his sister, that they should be a sacrifice to his departing ghost. This was an egress fit only for such persons, who meant to dwell with devils to eternal ages: and that man is hugely in love with sin, who cannot forbear in the week of assizes, and when himself stood at the bar of scrutiny, and prepared for his final, never-to-be-reversed sentence. He dies suddenly to the worse sense and event of sudden death, who so manages his sickness, that even that state shall not be innocent, but that he is surprised in the guilt of a new account. It is a sign of a reprobate spirit, and an habitual, prevailing, ruling sin, which exacts obedience, when the judgment looks him in the face. At least go to God with the innocence and fair deportment of thy person in the last scene of thy life, that when thy soul breaks into the state

of separation, it may carry the relishes of religion and sobriety to the places of its abode and sentence.*

7. When these things are taken care for, let the sick man so order his affairs, that he have but very little conversation with the world, but wholly (as he can) attend to religion, and antedate his conversation in heaven, always having intercourse with God, and still conversing with the holy Jesus, kissing his wounds, admiring his goodness, begging his mercy, feeding on him with faith, and drinking his blood: to which purpose it were very fit (if all circumstances be answerable) that the narrative of the passion of Christ be read or discoursed to him at length, or in brief, according to the style of the four gospels. But, in all things, let his care and society be as little secular as is possible.

OF THE PRACTICE OF PATIENCE.

Now we suppose the man entering upon his scene of sorrows and passive graces. It may be, he went yesterday to a wedding, merry and brisk, and there he felt his sentence, that he must return home and die (for men very commonly enter into the snare singing, and consider not, whither their fate leads them): nor feared, that then the angel was to strike his stroke, till his knees kissed the earth and his head trembled with the weight of the rod, which God put into the hand of an exterminating angel. But whatsoever the ingress was, when the man feels his blood boil, or his bones weary, or his flesh diseased with a load of a dispersed and disordered humour, or his head to ache, or his faculties discomposed, then he must consider, that all those discourses he hath heard concerning patience and resignation, and conformity to Christ's sufferings, and the melancholy lectures of the cross, must, all of them, now be reduced to practice, and pass from an ineffective contemplation to such an exercise, as will really try whether we were true disciples of the cross, or only believed the doctrines of religion, when we were at ease, and that they never passed through the ear to the heart, and dwelt not in our spirits. But every man should consider, God does nothing in vain; that he would not, to no purpose, send us preachers, and give us rules, and furnish us with discourse, and lend us books, and provide sermons, and make examples, and promise his Spirit, and describe the blessedness of holy sufferings, and prepare us with daily alarms, if he did not really purpose to order our affairs, so that we should need all this, and use it all. There were no such thing as the grace of patience, if we were not to feel a sickness, or enter into a state of sufferings: whither when we are entered, we are to practise by the following rules.

* Inscription in the Parish Church of Feversham, County of Kent:

Whoso him bethoft
Inwardly and oft
How hard it were to flit
From bed unto the pit,
From pit unto pain
That nere shall cease again,
He would not do one sin
All the world to win.

THE PRACTICE AND ACTS OF PATIENCE, BY WAY OF RULE.

1. AT the first address and presence of sickness, stand still and arrest thy spirit, that it may, without amazement or affright, consider that this was that thou lookedst for, and wert always certain should happen ; and that now thou art to enter into the actions of a new religion, the agony of a strange constitution ; but at no hand suffer thy spirits to be dispersed with fear, or wildness of thought, but stay their looseness and dispersion by a serious consideration of the present and future employment. For so doth the Libyan lion, spying the fierce huntsman, first beats himself with the strokes of his tale, and curls up his spirits, making them strong with union and recollection, till, being struck with a Mauritanian spear, he rushes forth into his defence and noblest contention ; and either 'scapes into the secrets of his own dwelling, or else dies the bravest of the forest. Every man, when shot with an arrow from God's quiver, must then draw in all the auxiliaries of reason, and know, that then is the time to try his strength, and to reduce the words of his religion into action, and consider, that if he behaves himself weakly and timorously, he suffers nevertheless of sickness ; but if he returns to health, he carries along with him the mark of a coward and a fool ; and if he descends into his grave he enters into the state of the faithless and unbelievers. Let him set his heart firm upon this resolution ; "I must bear it inevitably, and I will, by God's grace, do it nobly."

2. Bear in thy sickness all along the same thoughts, propositions, and discourses, concerning thy person, thy life and death, thy soul and religion, which thou hadst in the best days of thy health : and when thou didst discourse wisely concerning things spiritual. For it is to be supposed (and if it be not yet done, let this rule remind thee of it, and direct thee) that thou hast cast about in thy health, and considered concerning thy change and the evil day, that thou must be sick and die, that thou must need a comforter, and that it was certain, thou shouldst fall into a state, in which all the cords of thy anchor should be stretched, and the very rock and foundation of faith should be attempted ; and whatsoever fancies may disturb you, or whatsoever weaknesses may invade you, yet consider, when you were better able to judge and govern the accidents of your life, you concluded it necessary to trust in God, and possess your souls with patience. Think of things, as they think that stand by you, and as you did when you stood by others ; that it is a blessed thing to be patient ; that a quietness of spirit hath a certain reward ; that still there is infinite truth and reality in the promises of the gospel ; that still thou art in the care of God, in the condition of a son, and working out thy salvation with labour and pain, with fear and trembling : that now the sun is under a cloud, but it still sends forth the same influence : and be sure to make no new principles upon the stock of a quick and an impatient sense, or too busy an apprehension : keep your old principles, and, upon their stock, discourse and practise on towards your conclusion.

3. Resolve to bear your sickness like a child, that is, without considering the evils and the pains, the sorrows and the danger ; but go straight forward, and let thy thoughts cast about for nothing, but how to make advantages of it by the instrument of religion. He that from a high tower looks down

upon the precipice, and measures the space through which he must descend, and considers what a huge fall he shall have, shall feel more by the horror of it than by the last dash on the pavement: and he that tells his groans and numbers his sighs, and reckons one for every gripe of his belly or throb of his distempered pulse, will make an artificial sickness greater than the natural. And if thou beest ashamed that a child should bear an evil better than thou, then take his instrument, and allay thy spirit with it; reflect not upon thy evil, but contrive as much as you can for duty, and, in all the rest, inconsideration will ease your pain.

4. Do not choose the kind of thy sickness, or the manner of thy death; but let it be what God please, so it be no greater than thy spirit or thy patience: and for that you are to rely upon the promise of God, and to secure thyself by prayer and industry; but in all things else let God be thy chooser, and let it be thy work to submit indifferently, and attend thy duty. It is lawful to beg of God, that thy sickness may not be sharp or noisome, infectious or unusual, because these are circumstances of evil, which are also proper instruments of temptation: and though it may well concern the prudence of thy religion to fear thyself, and keep thee from violent temptations, who hast so often fallen in little ones; yet, even in these things, be sure to keep some degrees of indifferency; that is, if God will not be entreated to ease thee, or to change thy trial, then be importunate, that thy spirit and its interest be secured, and let him do what seemeth good in his eyes. But, as in the degrees of sickness thou art to submit to God, so in the kind of it (supposing equal degrees) thou art to be altogether incurious, whether God call thee by a consumption or an asthma, by a dropsy or a palsy, by a fever in thy humours or a fever in thy spirits; because all such nicety of choice, is nothing but a colour to a legitimate impatience, and to make an excuse to murmur privately and for circumstances, when in the sum of affairs we durst not own impatience. I have known some persons vehemently wish that they might die of a consumption, and some of these had a plot upon heaven, and hoped by that means to secure it after a careless life; as thinking a lingering sickness would certainly infer a lingering and a protracted repentance; and, by that means, they thought, they should be safest: others of them dreamed it would be an easier death, and have found themselves deceived; and their patience hath been tired with a weary spirit and a useless body, by often conversing with healthful persons and vigorous neighbours, by uneasiness of the flesh and the sharpness of their bones, by want of spirits and a dying life; and in conclusion, have been directly debauched by peevishness and a fretful sickness: and these men had better have left it to the wisdom and goodness of God; for they both are infinite.

5. Be patient in the desires of religion; and take care that the forwardness of exterior actions do not discompose thy spirit; while thou fearest, that, by less serving God in thy disability, thou runnest backward in the accounts of pardon and the favour of God. Be content, that the time which was formerly spent in prayer, be now spent in vomiting and carefulness and attendances; since God hath pleased it should be so, it does not become us to think hard thoughts concerning it. Do not think, that God is only to be found in a great prayer, or a solemn office: he is moved by a sigh, by a groan, by an act of love: and therefore, when your pain is great and pungent, lay all your strength upon it, to bear it patiently: when

the evil is something more tolerable, let your mind think some pious, though short, meditations : let it not be very busy and full of attention ; for that will be but a new temptation to your patience, and render your religion tedious and hateful. But record your desires, and present yourself to God by general acts of will and understanding, and by habitual remembrances of your former vigorousness, and by verification of the same grace, rather than proper exercises. If you can do more, do it ; but if you cannot, let it not become a scruple to thee. We must not think man is tied to the forms of health, or that he who swoons and faints, is obliged to his usual forms and hours of prayer ; if we cannot labour, yet let us love. Nothing can hinder us from that, but our own uncharitableness.

6. Be obedient to thy physician in those things that concern him, if he be a person fit to minister unto thee. God is he only that needs no help, and God hath created the physician for thine : therefore use him temperately, without violent confidences ; and sweetly, without uncivil distrustings, or refusing his prescriptions upon humours or impotent fear. A man may refuse to have his arm or leg cut off, or to suffer the pains of Marius's incision : and if he believes, that to die is the less evil, he may compose himself to it, without hazarding his patience, or introducing that which he thinks a worse evil ; but that which, in this article, is to be re-proved and avoided, is, that some men will choose to die out of fear of death, and send for physicians, and do what themselves list, and call for counsel, and follow none. When there is reason they should decline him, it is not to be accounted to the stock of a sin ; but where there is no just cause, there is a direct impatience.

Hither is to be reduced, that we be not too confident of the physician, or drain our hopes of recovery from the fountain through so imperfect channels ; laying the wells of God dry, and digging to ourselves broken cisterns. Physicians are the ministers of God's mercies and providence, in the matter of health and ease, of restitution or death ; and when God shall enable their judgments, and direct their counsels, and prosper their medicines, they shall do thee good, for which you must give God thanks, and to the physician the honour of a blessed instrument. But this cannot always be done : and Lucius Cornelius, the lieutenant in Portugal under Fabius the consul, boasted in the inscription of his monument, that he had lived a healthful and vegete age till his last sickness, but then complained he was forsaken by his physician, and railed upon Æsculapius, for not accepting his vow and passionate desire of preserving his life longer ; and all the effect of that impatience and folly was, that it is recorded to following ages, that he died without reason and without religion. But it was a sad sight to see the favour of all France confined to a physician and a barber, and the king (Louis XI.) to be so much their servant, that he should acknowledge and own his life from them, and all his ease to their gentle dressing of his gout and friendly ministries ; for the king thought himself undone and robbed, if he should die : his portion here was fair ; and he was loath to exchange his possession for the interest of a bigger hope.

7. Treat thy nurses and servants sweetly, and as it becomes an obliged and a necessitous person. Remember, that thou art very troublesome to them ; that they trouble not thee willingly ; that they strive to do thee ease and benefit, that they wish it, and sigh and pray for it, and are glad, if thou likest their attendance : that whatsoever is amiss, is thy disease, and

the uneasiness of thy head or thy side, thy distemper or thy disaffections ; and it will be an unhandsome injustice to be troublesome to them, because thou art so to thyself ; to make them feel a part of thy sorrows, that thou mayest not bear them alone ; evilly to requite their care by thy too curious and impatient wrangling and fretful spirit. That tenderness is vicious and unnatural, that shrieks out under the weight of a gentle cataplasm ; and he will ill comply with God's rod, that cannot endure his friend's greatest kindness ; and he will be very angry (if he durst) with God's smiting him, that is peevish with his servants that go about to ease him.

8. Let not the smart of your sickness make you to call violently for death : you are not patient, unless you be content to live ; God hath wisely ordered that we may be the better reconciled with death, because it is the period of many calamities ; but wherever the general hath placed thee, stir not from thy station, until thou beest called off, but abide so, that death may come to thee by the design of him who intends it to be thy advantage. God hath made sufferance to be thy work ; and do not impatiently long for evening, lest, at night, thou findest the reward of him, that was weary of his work : for he that is weary before his time, is an unprofitable servant, and is either idle or diseased.

9. That which remains in the practice of this grace, is, that the sick man should do acts of patience by way of prayer and ejaculation : in which he may serve himself of the following collection.

ACTS OF PATIENCE BY WAY OF PRAYER AND EJACULATION.

I WILL seek unto God, unto God will I commit my cause, which doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number. Job v. 8, 9, 11, 16—20.

To set up on high those that be low, that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

So the poor have hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.

For he maketh sore, and bindeth up ; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

He shall deliver thee in six troubles ; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a just age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.

I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee ; for thy right hand hath upholden me. Psalm lxiii. 6—8.

God restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the path of righteousness, for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Psalm xxiii. 3, 4.

In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me up upon a rock. Psalm xxvii. 5.

The Lord hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary ; from the heaven did the Lord behold the earth : to hear the groaning of his prisoners ; to loose those that are appointed to death. Psalm cii. 19, 20.

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord ; my sore ran in the night and ceased not ; my soul refused to be comforted, I remembered God, and was troubled : I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking ; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. Will the Lord cast me off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ? Is his promise clean gone for ever ? Doth his promise fail for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? And I said, This is my infirmity : but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. Psalm lxxvii. 1—4. 7—10.

No temptation hath taken me, but such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able ; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that I may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. x. 13.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning ; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. Now the God of peace and consolation grant me to be so minded. Rom. xv. 4, 5.

It is the Lord : let him do what seemeth good in his eyes. 1 Sam. iii. 18.

Surely the word that the Lord hath spoken is very good : but thy servant is weak : O remember mine infirmities ; and lift thy servant up, that leaneth upon thy right hand.

There is given unto me a thorn in the flesh to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Cor. xii. 7—10.

O Lord, thou hast pleaded the cause of my soul ; thou hast redeemed my life. And I said, My strength and my hope is in the Lord ; remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me. This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.

It is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning ; great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, said my soul ; therefore will I hope in him.

The Lord is good to them that wait for him : to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Lam. iii. 58, 8—26, 31—33, 39.

Wherefore doth a living man complain ? a man for the punishment of

his sins? O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave [of Jesus], that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past: that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! Job xiv. 13.

Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Job ii. 20.

[*The sick man may recite, or hear recited, the following psalms in the intervals of his agony.*]

I.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Psalm vi.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?

Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies' sake.

For in death no man remembereth thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears.

Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all my [sorrows].

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord hath heard my supplication: the Lord will receive my prayer.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath heard my prayer, and hath not turned his mercy from me.

II.

In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? Psalm xi.

The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust. Psalm xvi. 1.

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee.

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. Psalm xvii.

III.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble : mine eye is consumed with grief ; yea, my soul and my belly. Psalm xxxi.

For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing : my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

I am like a broken vessel.

But I trusted in thee, O Lord ; I said, Thou art my God.

My times are in thy hand : make thy face to shine upon thy servant : save me for thy mercy's sake.

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Psalm xxvii.

Hide not thy face from me ; put not thy servant away in thine anger : thou hast been my help ; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men ! Psalms xxxi.

Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man : thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues [*from the calumnies and aggravation of sins by devils*].

I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes : nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto thee.

O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth the faithful and plenteously rewardeth the proud doer.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart all ye that hope in the Lord.

PRAYER TO BE SAID IN THE BEGINNING OF A SICKNESS.

O ALMIGHTY God, merciful and gracious, who in thy justice, didst send sorrow and tears, sickness and death, into the world, as a punishment for man's sins, and hast comprehended all under sin, and this sad covenant of sufferings, not to destroy us, but that thou mightest have mercy upon all, making thy justice to minister to mercy, short afflictions to an eternal weight of glory ; as thou hast turned my sins into sickness, so turn my sickness to the advantages of holiness and religion, of mercy and pardon, of faith and hope, of grace and glory. Thou hast now called me to the fellowship of sufferings : Lord, by the instrument of religion let my present condition be so sanctified, that my sufferings may be united to the sufferings of my Lord, that so thou mayest pity me and assist me. Relieve my sorrow, and support my spirit : direct my thoughts, and sanctify the accidents of my sickness, and grant that the punishment of my sin may be the school of virtue ; in which, since thou hast now entered me, Lord, make me a holy proficient ; that I may behave myself as a son under discipline, humbly and obediently, evenly and penitently, that I may come by this means nearer unto thee ; that if I shall go forth of this sickness by the gate of life and health, I may return to the world with great strengths of spirit, to run a new race of a stricter holiness and a more severe religion : or if I pass from hence with

the outlet of death, I may enter into the bosom of my Lord, and may feel the present joys of a certain hope of that sea of pleasures, in which all thy saints and servants shall be comprehended to eternal ages. Grant this for Jesus Christ's sake, our dearest Lord and Saviour. Amen.

AN ACT OF RESIGNATION FOR THE EVIL ACCIDENTS OF SICKNESS.

O ETERNAL God, thou hast made me and sustained me ; thou hast blessed me in all the days of my life, and hast taken care of me in all variety of accidents ; and nothing happens to me in vain, nothing without thy providence ; and I know thou smitest thy servants in mercy, and with designs of the greatest pity in the world : Lord, I humbly lie down under thy rod ; do with me as thou pleasest : do thou choose for me, not only the whole state and condition of being, but every little and great accident of it. Keep me safe by thy grace, and then use what instrument thou pleasest, of bringing me to thee. Lord, I am not solicitous of the passage, so I may get to thee. Only, O Lord, remember my infirmities, and let thy servant rejoice in thee always, and feel and confess, and glory in thy goodness. O be thou as delightful to me in this my medicinal sickness, as ever thou wert in any of the dangers of my prosperity : let me not peevishly refuse thy pardon at the rate of a severe discipline. I am thy servant and thy creature, thy purchased possession, and thy son : I am all thine : and because thou hast mercy in store for all that trust in thee, I cover mine eyes, and in silence wait for the time of my redemption. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE GRACE OF PATIENCE.

MOST merciful and gracious Father, who, in the redemption of lost mankind by the passion of thy most holy Son, hast established a covenant of sufferings, I bless and magnify thy name, that thou hast adopted me into the inheritance of sons, and hast given me a portion of my elder Brother. Lord, the cross falls heavy and sits uneasy upon my shoulders ; my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak : I humbly beg of thee, that I may now rejoice in this thy dispensation and effect of providence. I know and am persuaded, that thou art then as gracious, when thou smitest us for amendment or trial, as when thou relievest our wearied bodies in compliance with our infirmity. I rejoice, O Lord, in thy rare and mysterious mercy, who, by sufferings, hast turned our misery into advantages unspeakable : for so thou makes us like to thy Son, and givest us a gift, that the angels never did receive : for they cannot die in conformity to, and imitation of, their Lord and ours ; but, blessed be thy name, we can ; and, dearest Lord, let it be so. Amen.

II.

THOU, who art the God of patience and consolation, strengthen me in the inner man, that I may bear the yoke and burden of the Lord without any uneasy and useless murmurs and ineffective unwillingness. Lord, I am unable to stand under the cross, unable of myself : but thou, O holy Jesus, who didst feel the burden of it, who didst sink under it, and wert pleased to admit a man to bear part of the load, when thou underwent all for him, be thou pleased to ease this load by fortifying my spirit, that I may be strongest when I am weakest, and may be able to do and suffer every thing

thou pleasest, through Christ, who strengthens me. Lord, if thou wilt support me, I will for ever praise thee: if thou wilt suffer the load to press me yet more heavily, I will cry unto thee, and complain unto my God; and at last I will lie down and die, and, by the mercies and intercession of the holy Jesus, and the conduct of thy blessed Spirit, and the ministry of angels, pass into those mansions, where holy souls rest, and weep no more. Lord, pity me; Lord, sanctify this my sickness; Lord, strengthen me; holy Jesus, save me, and deliver me. Thou knowest how shamefully I have fallen with pleasure: in thy mercy and very pity, let me not fall with pain too. O let me never charge God foolishly, nor offend thee by my impatience and uneasy spirit, nor weaken the hands and hearts of those that charitably minister to my needs: but let me pass through the valley of tears and the valley of the shadow of death with safety and peace, with a meek spirit and a sense of the divine mercies: and though thou breakest me in pieces, my hope is, thou wilt gather me up in the gatherings of eternity. Grant this, eternal God, gracious Father, for the merits and intercession of our merciful high priest, who once suffered for me, and for ever intercedes for me, our most gracious and ever-blessed Saviour, Jesus.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID WHEN THE SICK MAN TAKES PHYSIC.

O MOST blessed and eternal Jesus, thou, who art the great Physician of our souls, and the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in thy wings, to thee is given by thy heavenly Father the government of all the world, and thou disposest every great and little accident to thy Father's honour, and to the good and comfort of them that love and serve thee: be pleased to bless the ministry of thy servant in order to my ease and health, direct his judgment, prosper the medicines, and dispose the chances of my sickness fortunately, that I may feel the blessing and loving-kindness of the Lord in the ease of my pain and the restitution of my health: that I, being restored to the society of the living, and to thy solemn assemblies, may praise thee and thy goodness, secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation of thy redeemed ones, here in the outer courts of the Lord, and hereafter in thy eternal temple for ever and ever. Amen.

OF THE PRACTICE OF THE GRACE OF FAITH IN THE TIME
OF SICKNESS.

Now is the time, in which the faith appears most necessary and most difficult. It is the foundation of a good life, and the foundation of all our hopes: it is that, without which we cannot live well, and without which we cannot die well: it is a grace that then we shall need to support our spirits, to sustain our hopes, to alleviate our sickness, to resist temptation, to prevent despair; upon the belief of the articles of our religion, we can do the works of a holy life; but upon belief of the promises, we can bear our sickness patiently, and die cheerfully. The sick man may practise it in the following instances.

1. Let the sick man be careful, that he do not admit of any doubt concerning that which he believed and received from a common consent in his best health and days of election and religion. For, if the devil can but prevail so far as to unfix and unrivet the resolution and confidence of fulness of assent, it is easy for him so to unwind the spirit, that from why to whether or no, from whether or no to scarcely not, from scarcely not to absolutely not at all, are steps of a descending and falling spirit : and whatsoever a man is made to doubt of by the weakness of his understanding in a sickness, it will be hard to get an instrument strong and subtle enough to reinforce and insure : for when the strengths are gone, by which faith held, and it does not stand firm by the weight of its own bulk and great constitution, nor yet by the cordage of a tenacious root ; then it is prepared for a ruin, which it cannot escape in the tempests of a sickness and the assaults of a devil. Discourse and argument, the line of tradition and a never-failing experience, the Spirit of God and the truth of miracles, the word of prophecy and the blood of martyrs, the excellency of the doctrine and the necessity of men, the riches of the promises and the wisdom of the revelations, the reasonableness and sublimity, the concordance and the usefulness of the articles, and their compliance with all the needs of man, and the government of commonwealths, are like the strings and branches of the roots, by which faith stands firm and unmovable in the spirit and understanding of a man. But in sickness, the understanding is shaken, and the ground is removed in which the root did grapple, and support its trunk ; and therefore there is no way now, but that it be left to stand upon the old confidences, and by the firmament of its own weight ; it must be left to stand, because it always stood there before : and as it stood all its life-time in the ground of understanding, so it must now be supported with will, and a fixed resolution. But disputation tempts it, and shakes it with trying, and overthrows it with shaking. Above all things in the world, let the sick man fear a proposition, which his sickness hath put into him contrary to the discourses of health and a sober and untroubled reason.

2. Let the sick man mingle the recital of his creed together with his devotions, and in that let him account his faith ; not in curiosity and factions, in the confessions of parties and interests : for some over-forward zeals are so earnest to profess their little and uncertain articles and glory so to die in a particular and divided communion, that, in the profession of their faith, they lose or discompose their charity. Let it be enough, that we secure our interest of heaven, though we do not go about to appropriate the mansions to our sect : for every good man hopes to be saved, as he is a Christian, and not as he is a Lutheran, or of another division. However, those articles, upon which he can build the exercise of any virtue in his sickness, or upon the stock of which he can improve his present condition, are such as consist in the greatness and goodness, the veracity and mercy, of God through Jesus Christ : nothing of which can be concerned in the fond disputations which faction and interest have too long maintained in Christendom.

3. Let the sick man's faith especially be active about the promises of grace, and the excellent things of the gospel : those which can comfort his sorrows, and enable his patience : those, upon the hopes of which he did the duties of his life, and for which he is not unwilling to die ; such as the intercession and advocacy of Christ, remission of sins, the resurrection,

the mysterious arts and mercies of man's redemption, Christ's triumph over death, and all the powers of hell, the covenant of grace, or the blessed issues of repentance; and, above all, the article of eternal life, upon the strength of which, eleven thousand virgins went cheerfully together to their martyrdom, and twenty thousand Christians were burned by Dioclesian on a Christmas day, and whole armies of Asian Christians offered themselves to the tribunals of Arius Antonius, and whole colleges of severe persons were instituted, who lived upon religion, whose dinner was the eucharist, whose supper was praise, and their nights were watches, and their days were labour; for the hope of which, then, men counted it gain to lose their estates, and gloried in their sufferings, and rejoiced in their persecutions, and were glad at their disgraces. This is the article, that hath made all the martyrs of Christ confident and glorious; and if it does not more than sufficiently strengthen our spirits to the present suffering, it is because we understand it not, but have the appetites of beasts and fools. But if the sick man fixes his thoughts, and sets his habitation to dwell here, he swells his hopes, and masters his fears, and eases his sorrows, and overcomes his temptations.

4. Let the sick man endeavour to turn his faith of the articles into the love of them: and that will be an excellent instrument, not only to refresh his sorrows, but to confirm his faith in defiance of all temptations. For a sick man and a disturbed understanding are not competent and fit instruments to judge concerning the reasonableness of a proposition. But therefore let him consider and love it, because it is useful and necessary, profitable and gracious: and when he is once in love with it, and then also renews his love to it, when he feels the need of it, he is an interested person, and, for his own sake, will never let it go and pass into the shadows of doubting, or the utter darkness of infidelity. An act of love will make him have a mind to it; and we easily believe what we love, but very uneasily part with our belief, which we for so great an interest have chosen, and entertained with a great affection.

5. Let the sick person be infinitely careful, that his faith be not tempted by any man, or any thing; and when it is in any degree weakened, let him lay fast hold upon the conclusion, upon the article itself, and by earnest prayer beg of God to guide him in certainty and safety. For let him consider that the article is better than all its contrary or contradictory, and he is concerned that it be true, and concerned, also, that he do believe it: but he can receive no good at all, if Christ did not die, if there be no resurrection, if his creed hath deceived him; therefore all that he is to do, is to secure his hold, which he can do no way but by prayer and by his interest. And by this argument or instrument it was, that Socrates refreshed the evil of his condition, when he was to drink his aconite. "If the soul be immortal, and perpetual rewards be laid up for wise souls, then I lose nothing by my death: but if there be not, then I lose nothing by my opinion; for it supports my spirit in my passage, and the evil of being deceived cannot overtake me, when I have no being." So it is with all that are tempted in their faith. If those articles be not true, then the men are nothing; if they be true, then they are happy: and if the articles fail, there can be no punishment for believing; but if they are true, my not believing destroys all my portion in them, and possibility to receive the excellent things which they contain. By faith we quench the fiery darts of the devil: but if our faith be quenched, wherewithal shall we be able to endure the assault?

Therefore seize upon the article, and secure the great object, and the great instrument, that is, the hopes of pardon and eternal life through Jesus Christ ; and do this by all means, and by any instrument, artificial or inartificial, by argument or by stratagem, by perfect resolution or by discourse, by the hand and ears of premises or the foot of the conclusion, by right or by wrong, because we understand it or because we love it, because I will and because I ought ; because it is safe to do so and because it is not safe to do otherwise ; because if I do, I may receive a good ; and because if I do not, I am miserable ; either for that I shall have a portion of sorrows, or that I can have no portion of good things without it.

ACTS OF FAITH FOR THE SICK UNDER TEMPTATION.

LORD, whither shall I go ? thou hast the words of eternal life. John vi. 68.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, &c.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, &c.

Lord, I believe : help thou mine unbelief. Mark ix. 24. I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself : for whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. Rom. xiv. 14, 7, 8.

If God be for us, who can be against us ? Rom. viii. 31—34.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things ?

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died ; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God ; who also maketh intercession for us.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

O grant that I may obtain mercy, that in me Jesus Christ may show forth all long-suffering, that I may believe in him to life everlasting.

I am bound to give thanks unto God alway, because God hath from the beginning chosen me to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called me by the gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. 13—17.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort my heart, and stablish me in every good word and work.

The Lord direct my heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. 2 Thess. iii. 5.

O that our God would count me worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power : that

the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in me, and I in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

Let us who are of the day, be sober; putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another. 1 Thess. v. 8—10, 12.

There is no name under heaven, whereby we can be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts iv. 12. And every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Acts iii. 23.

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ. Gal. vi. 14. I desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Cor. ii. 2. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Phil. i. 21.

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of? Isa. ii. 22. But the just shall live by faith. Hab. ii. 4.

Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, John xi. 27, the Saviour of the world, John iv. 42, the resurrection and the life; and he that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live. John xi. 25, 40.

Jesus said unto her, Said I not to thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, make me steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: for I know that my labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 55—58.

PRAYER FOR THE GRACE AND STRENGTHS OF FAITH.

O HOLY and eternal Jesus, who didst die for me and all mankind, abolishing our sin, reconciling us to God, adopting us into the portion of thine heritage, and establishing with us a covenant of faith and obedience, making our souls to rely upon spiritual strengths, by the supports of a holy belief, and the expectation of rare promises, and the infallible truths of God: O let me for ever dwell upon the rock, leaning upon thy arm, believing thy word, trusting in thy promises, waiting for thy mercies, and doing thy commandments; that the devil may not prevail upon me, and my own weaknesses may not abuse or unsettle my persuasions, nor my sins discompose my just confidence in thee and thy eternal mercies. Let me always be thy servant and thy disciple, and die in the communion of thy church, of all faithful people. Lord, I renounce whatsoever is against thy truth; and if secretly I have, or do believe, any false proposition, I do it in the simplicity of my heart and great weakness; and if I could discover it, would dash it in pieces by a solemn disclaiming it: for thou art the way, the truth, and the life. And I know, that whatsoever thou hast declared, that is the truth of God: and I do firmly adhere to the religion thou hast taught, and glory in nothing so much as that I am a Christian; that thy name is called upon me. O

my God, though I die, yet will I put my trust in thee. In thee, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded. Amen.

ACTS OF REPENTANCE, TO BE USED ESPECIALLY BY OLD MEN,
AND BY ALL IN SICKNESS.

LET us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens. We have transgressed and rebelled; and thou hast not pardoned. Thou hast covered with anger and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. O cover not thyself with a cloud; but let our prayer pass through. Lam. iii. 40—44.

I have sinned: what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost not thou pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be. Job vii. 20, 21.

The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandments. Hear, I pray, all ye people, behold my sorrow. Behold, O Lord, I am in distress: my bowels are troubled: my heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled. Lam. i. 18, 40.

Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and so shall we be turned: renew our days as of old. O reject me not utterly, and be not exceeding wroth against thy servant. Lam. v. 19—22.

O remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; but according to thy mercies remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Psalm xxv. 7. Do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow that declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust. Psalm cix. 21—23.

Then Zaccheus stood forth, and said, Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man, I restore him fourfold. Luke xix. 8.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and consider my desire. Psalm cxliii. 1. Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. Psalm cxli. 3. And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God: let thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness. Psalm cxliii. 2, 10.

I will speak of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I make my prayer. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk in my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside: it shall not cleave to me. Psalm ci. 1—3.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in

me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, from malice, envy, the follies of lust, and violences of passion, &c., thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. Psalm li. 9, 10, 14.

The sacrifice of God is a broken heart : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Ver. 17.

Lord, I have done amiss; I have been deceived : let so great a wrong as this be removed, and let it be so no more.

THE PRAYER FOR THE GRACE AND PERFECTION OF REPENTANCE.

I.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, thou art the great judge of all the world, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the Father of men and angels; thou lovest not that a sinner should perish, but delightest in our conversion and salvation, and hast, in our Lord Jesus Christ, established the covenant of repentance, and promised pardon to all them that confess their sins and forsake them : O my God, be thou pleased to work in me, what thou hast commanded should be in me. Lord, I am a dry tree, who neither have brought forth fruit unto thee and unto holiness, nor have wept out salutary tears, the instrument of life and restitution, but have behaved myself like an unconcerned person in the ruins and breaches of my soul : but, O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee in a barren and thirsty land, where no water is.* Lord, give me the grace of tears and pungent sorrow : let my heart be as a land of rivers of waters, and my head a fountain of tears : turn my sin into repentance, and let my repentance proceed to pardon and refreshment.

II.

SUPPORT me with thy graces, strengthen me with thy Spirit, soften my heart with the fire of thy love, and the dew of heaven; with penitential showers : make my care prudent, and the remaining portion of my days like the perpetual watches of the night, full of caution and observance, strong and resolute, patient and severe. I remember, O Lord, that I did sin with greediness and passion, with great desires and an unabated choice : O let me be as great in my repentance as ever I have been in my calamity and shame : let my hatred of sin be as great as my love to thee, and both as near to infinite, as my proportion can receive.

III.

O LORD, I renounce all affection to sin, and would not buy my health nor redeem my life with doing any thing against the laws of my God, but would rather die than offend thee. O dearest Saviour, have pity upon thy servant : let me, by thy sentence, be doomed to perpetual penance during the abode of this life : let every sigh be the expression of a repentance, and every groan an accent of spiritual life, and every stroke of my disease a punishment of my sin, and an instrument of pardon; that, at my return to the land of innocence and pleasure, I may eat of the votive sacrifice of the supper of the Lamb, that was, from the beginning of the world, slain for

* Psalm lxxiii. 1.

the sins of every sorrowful and returning sinner. O grant me sorrow here, and joy hereafter, through Jesus Christ, who is our hope, the resurrection of the dead, the justifier of a sinner, and the glory of all faithful souls. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR PARDON OF SINS, TO BE SAID IN TIME OF SICKNESS,
AND IN OLD AGE.

I.

O ETERNAL and most gracious Father, I humbly throw myself down at the foot of thy mercy-seat, upon the confidence of thy essential mercy, and thy commandment, that we should come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy in time of need. O my God, hear the prayers and cries of a sinner, who calls earnestly for mercy. Lord, my needs are greater than all the degrees of my desire can be; unless thou hast pity upon me, I perish infinitely and intolerably; and then there will be one voice fewer in the choir of singers, who shall recite thy praises to eternal ages. But, O Lord, in mercy deliver my soul. O save me for thy mercy's sake.* For in the second death, there is no remembrance of thee: in that grave, who shall give thee thanks?

II.

O JUST and dear God, my sins are innumerable; they are upon my soul in multitudes; they are a burden too heavy for me to bear; they already bring sorrow and sickness, shame and displeasure, guilt and a decaying spirit, a sense of thy present displeasure, and fear of worse, of infinitely worse. But it is to thee so essential, so delightful, so usual, so desired by thee to show mercy, that although my sin be very great, and my fear proportionable, yet thy mercy is infinitely greater than all the world, and my hope and my comfort rise up in proportion towards it, that I trust the devils shall never be able to reprove it, nor my own weakness discompose it. Lord, thou hast sent thy Son to die for the pardon of my sins: thou hast given me thy Holy Spirit, as a seal of adoption to consign the article of remission of sins: thou hast, for all my sins, still continued to invite me to conditions of life by thy ministers the prophets; and thou hast, with variety of holy acts, softened my spirit, and possessed my fancy, and instructed my understanding, and bended and inclined my will, and directed or overruled my passions in order to repentance and pardon: and why should not thy servant beg passionately, and humbly hope for, the effects of all these thy strange and miraculous acts of loving-kindness? Lord, I deserve it not, but I hope thou wilt pardon all my sins; and I beg it of thee for Jesus Christ's sake, whom thou hast made the great endearment of thy promises, and the foundation of our hopes, and the mighty instrument whereby we can obtain of thee whatsoever we need and can receive.

III.

O MY God, how shall thy servant be disposed to receive such a favour, which is so great, that the ever-blessed Jesus did die to purchase it for us; so great, that the fallen angels never could hope, and never shall obtain it?

* Psalm vi. 4, 5.

Lord, I do from my soul forgive all that have sinned against me : O forgive me my sins, as I forgive them that have sinned against me. Lord, I confess my sins unto thee daily by the accusations and secret acts of conscience; and if we confess our sins, thou hast called it a part of justice to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord, I put my trust in thee; and thou art ever gracious to them that put their trust in thee. I call upon my God for mercy; and thou art always more ready to hear, than we to pray. But all that I can do, and all that I am, and all that I know of myself, is nothing but sin, and infirmity, and misery; therefore I go forth of myself, and throw myself wholly into the arms of thy mercy through Jesus Christ, and beg of thee for his death and passion's sake, by his resurrection and ascension, by all the parts of our redemption, and thy infinite mercy, in which thou pleassest thyself above all the works of the creation, to be pitiful and compassionate to thy servant in the abolition of all my sins : so shall I praise thy glories with a tongue not defiled with evil language, and a heart purged by thy grace, quitted by thy mercy, and absolved by thy sentence, from generation to generation. Amen.

AN ACT OF HOLY RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT OF LIFE,
IN CASE OF RECOVERY.

O MOST just and most merciful Lord God, who hast sent evil diseases, sorrow and fear, trouble and uneasiness, briars and thorns, into the world, and planted them in our houses, and round about our dwellings, to keep sin from our souls, or to drive it thence; I humbly beg of thee, that this my sickness may serve the ends of the Spirit, and be a messenger of spiritual life, an instrument of reducing me to more religious and sober courses. I say, O Lord, that I am unready and unprepared in my accounts, having thrown away great portions of my time in vanity, and set myself hugely back in the accounts of eternity; and I had need live my life over again, and live it better : but thy counsels are in the great deep, and thy footsteps are in the waters; and I know not what thou wilt determine of me. If I die, I throw myself into the arms of the holy Jesus, whom I love above all things; and if I perish, I know I have deserved it; but thou wilt not reject him that loves thee. But if I recover, I will live, by thy grace and help, to do the work of God, and passionately pursue my interest of heaven, and serve thee in the labour of love, with the charities of a holy zeal, and the diligence of a firm and humble obedience. Lord, I will dwell in thy temple, and in thy service : religion shall be my employment, and alms shall be my recreation, and patience shall be my rest, and to do thy will shall be my meat and drink; and to live shall be Christ, and then to die shall be gain.

“O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen.” “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Amen.

OFFICES TO BE SAID BY THE MINISTER IN HIS VISITATION
OF THE SICK.

IN the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
“Our Father, which art in heaven,” &c.

LET THE MINISTER SAY THIS PRAYER SECRETLY.

O ETERNAL Jesus, thou great lover of souls, who hast constituted a ministry in the church to glorify thy name, and to serve in the assistance of those that come to thee, professing thy discipline and service, give grace to me, the unworthiest of thy servants, that I, in this my ministry, may purely and zealously intend thy glory, and effectually may minister comfort and advantages to this sick person (whom God assail from all his offences); and grant that nothing of thy grace may perish to him by the unworthiness of the minister; but let thy Spirit speak by me, and give me prudence and charity, wisdom and diligence, good observation and apt discourses, a certain judgment and merciful dispensation, that the soul of thy servant may pass from this state of imperfection to the perfections of the state of glory, through thy mercies, O eternal Jesus. Amen.

THE PSALM.

OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. Psal. cxxx.

If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait; and in his word do I hope.

My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning.

Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

And he shall redeem his servants from all their iniquities. Psal. cxxx.

Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the wickedness of my heels shall compass me about? Psal. xlix. 5.

No man can, by any means, redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, ver. 7.

For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever, ver. 8.

That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption, ver. 9.

But wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others, ver. 10.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me, ver. 15.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake in thy likeness. Psal. xvii. 15.

Thou shalt show me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psal. xvi. 11.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

As it was in the beginning, &c.

PRAYERS.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of mercies, the God of peace and comfort, of rest and pardon, we, thy servants, though unworthy to pray to thee, yet in duty to thee and charity to our brother, humbly beg mercy of thee for him to descend upon his body and his soul; one sinner, O Lord, for another, the miserable for the afflicted, the poor for him that is in need: but thou givest thy graces and thy favours by the measures of thy own mercies, and in proportion to our necessities. We humbly come to thee in the name of Jesus, for the merit of our Saviour, and the mercies of our God, praying thee to pardon the sins of this thy servant, and to put them all upon the accounts of the cross, and to bury them in the grave of Jesus; that they may never rise up in judgment against thy servant, nor bring him to shame and confusion of face in the day of final inquiry and sentence. Amen.

II.

GIVE thy servant patience in his sorrows, comfort in this his sickness, and restore him to health, if it seem good to thee, in order to thy great ends, and his greatest interest. And, however thou shalt determine concerning him in this affair, yet make his repentance perfect, and his passage safe, and his faith strong, and his hope modest and confident; that, when thou shalt call his soul from the prison of the body, it may enter into the securities and rest of the sons of God, in the bosom of blessedness, and the custodies of Jesus. Amen.

III.

THOU, O Lord, knowest all the necessities and all the infirmities of thy servant: fortify his spirit with spiritual joys and perfect resignation, and take from him all degrees of inordinate or insecure affections to this world, and enlarge his heart with desires of being with thee, and of freedom from sin, and fruition of God.

IV.

LORD, let not any pain or passion discompose the order and decency of his thoughts and duty; and lay no more upon thy servant, than thou wilt make him able to bear, and together with the temptation do thou provide a way to escape; even by the mercies of a longer and a more holy life, or by the miseries of a blessed death: even as it pleaseth thee, O Lord, so let it be.

V.

LET the tenderness of his conscience and the Spirit of God call to mind his sins, that they may be confessed and repented of: because thou hast promised, that if we confess our sins, we shall have mercy. Let thy mighty grace draw out from his soul every root of bitterness, lest the remains of the old man be accursed with the reserves of thy wrath: but in the union of the holy Jesus, and in the charities of God and of the world, and the communion of all the saints, let his soul be presented to the blameless, and entirely pardoned, and thoroughly washed, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The prayer of St Eustatius the Martyr, which he said, when he was going to martyrdom. To be used by a sick or dying man.

I WILL praise thee, O Lord, that thou hast considered my low estate, and hast not shut me up in the hands of mine enemies, nor made my foes to rejoice over me; and now let thy right hand protect me, and let thy mercy come upon me; for my soul is in trouble and anguish, because of its departure from the body. O let not the assemblies of its wicked and cruel enemies meet it in the passing forth, nor hinder me by reason of the sins of my past life. O Lord, be favourable unto me, that my soul may not behold the hellish countenance of the spirits of darkness, but let thy bright and joyful angels entertain it. Give glory to thy holy name and to thy majesty; place me by thy merciful arm before thy seat of judgment, and let not the hand of the prince of this world snatch me from thy presence, or bear me into hell. Mercy, sweet Jesu. Amen.

A prayer taken out of the Euchologion of the Greek church, to be said by, or in behalf of, people, in their danger, or near their death.

I.

BEIRED with sins and naked of good deeds, I, that am the meat of worms, cry vehemently in spirit; cast not me, a wretch, away from thy face; place me not on the left hand, who with thy hands didst fashion me; but give rest unto my soul, for thy great mercy's sake, O Lord.

II.

SUPPLICATE with tears unto Christ, who is to judge my poor soul, that he will deliver me from the fire that is unquenchable. I pray you all, my friends and acquaintance, make mention of me in your prayers, that in the day of judgment I may find mercy at that dreadful tribunal.

III.

Then may the standers-by pray.

WHEN, in unspeakable glory, thou dost come dreadfully to judge the whole world, vouchsafe, O gracious Redeemer, that this thy faithful servant may in the clouds meet thee cheerfully. They, who have been dead from the beginning, with terrible and fearful trembling stand at thy tribunal, waiting thy just sentence. O Blessed Saviour Jesus! none shall there avoid thy formidable and most righteous judgment. All kings and princes with servants stand together, and hear the dreadful voice of the Judge condemning the people which have sinned, into hell: from which sad sentence, O Christ, deliver thy servant. Amen.

Then let the sick man be called upon to rehearse the articles of his faith; or, if he be so weak he cannot, let him (if he have not before done it) be called to say, Amen, when they are recited, or to give some testimony of his faith and confident assent to them.

After which it is proper (if the person be in capacity) that the minister examine him, and invite him to confession, and all the parts of repentance,

according to the foregoing rules : after which, he may pray the prayer of absolution.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, who hath given commission to his church, in his name to pronounce pardon to all that are truly penitent, he, of his mercy, pardon and forgive thee all thy sins, deliver thee from all evils past, present, and future, preserve thee in the faith and fear of his holy name to thy life's end, and bring thee to his everlasting kingdom, to live with him for ever and ever. Amen.

When the time draws near of the sick man's dissolution, the minister may assist by the following order of recommendation of the soul.

I.

O HOLY and most gracious Saviour, Jesus, we humbly recommend the soul of thy servant into thy hands, thy most merciful hands; let thy blessed angels stand in ministry about thy servant, and defend him from the violence and malice of all his ghostly enemies, and drive far hence all the spirits of darkness. Amen.

II.

LORD, receive the soul of this thy servant : enter not into judgment with thy servant : spare him whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood : deliver him from all evil, for whose sake thou didst suffer all evil and mischief; from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from the fear of death, and from everlasting death, good Lord, deliver him. Amen.

III.

IMPUTE not unto him the follies of his youth, nor any of the errors and miscarriages of his life; but strengthen him in his agony, let not his faith waver, nor his hope fail, nor his charity be disordered; let none of his enemies imprint upon him any afflictive or evil phantasm; let him die in peace, and rest in hope, and rise in glory. Amen.

IV.

LORD, we know and believe assuredly, that whatsoever is under thy custody cannot be taken out of thy hands, nor by all the violences of hell robbed of thy protection : preserve the work of thy hands, rescue him from all evil; take into the participation of thy glories him to whom thou hast given the seal of adoption, the earnest of the inheritance of the saints. Amen.

V.

LET his portion be with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with Job and David, with the prophets and apostles, with the martyrs and all thy holy saints, in the arms of Christ, in the bosom of felicity, in the kingdom of God to eternal ages. Amen.

Let us pray.

O ALMIGHTY and eternal God, there is no number of thy days or of thy mercies : thou hast sent us into this world to serve thee, and to live according to thy laws; but we by our sins have provoked thee to wrath, and

we have planted thorns and sorrows round about our dwellings : and our life is but a span long, and yet very tedious, because of the calamities that enclose us in on every side; the days of our pilgrimage are few and evil; we have frail and sickly bodies, violent and distempered passions, long designs and but a short stay, weak understandings and strong enemies, abused fancies, perverse wills. O dear God, look upon us in mercy and pity : let not our weaknesses make us to sin against thee, nor our fear cause us to betray our duty, nor our former follies provoke thy eternal anger, nor the calamities of this world vex us into tediousness of spirit and impatience : but let thy Holy Spirit lead us through this valley of misery with safety and peace, with holiness and religion, with spiritual comforts and joy in the Holy Ghost : that, when we have served thee in our generations, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a holy conscience, in the communion of the catholic church, in the confidence of a certain faith, and the comforts of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope, and perfect charity with thee our God and all the world; that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, may be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

II.

O HOLY and most gracious Saviour Jesus, in whose hands the souls of all faithful people are laid up till the day of recompense, have mercy upon the body and soul of this his servant and upon all thy elect people, who love the Lord Jesus, and long for his coming; Lord, refresh the imperfection of their condition with the aids of the Spirit of grace and comfort, and with the visitation and guard of angels, and supply to them all the necessities known only unto thee; let them dwell in peace, and feel thy mercies pitying their infirmities, and the follies of their flesh, and speedily satisfying the desires of their spirits : and when thou shalt bring us all forth in the day of judgment, O then show thyself to be our Saviour Jesus, our advocate and our judge. Lord, then remember, that thou hast, for so many ages, prayed for the pardon of those sins, which thou art then to sentence. Let not the accusations of our consciences, nor the calumnies and aggravation of devils, nor the effects of thy wrath, press those souls, which thou lovest, which thou didst redeem, which thou dost pray for; but enable us all, by the supporting hand of thy mercy, to stand upright in judgment. O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us : O Lord, let thy mercy light upon us, as our trust is in thee. O Lord, in thee have we trusted, let us never be confounded. Let us meet with joy, and for ever dwell with thee, feeling thy pardon, supported with thy graciousness, absolved by thy sentence, saved by thy mercy, that we may sing to the glory of thy name eternal hallelujahs. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Then may be added in the behalf of all that are present, these ejaculations.

O SPARE US a little, that we may recover our strength, before we go hence, and be no more seen. Amen.

Cast us not away, in the time of age; O forsake us not, when strength faileth. Amen.

Grant that we may never sleep in sin or death eternal, but that we may

have our part of the first resurrection, and that the second death may not prevail over us. Amen.

Grant that our souls may be bound up in the bundle of life; and in the day when thou bindest up thy jewels, remember thy servants for good, and not for evil, that our souls may be numbered amongst the righteous. Amen.

Grant unto all sick and dying Christians mercy and aids from heaven; and receive the souls returning unto thee, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood. Amen.

Grant unto thy servants to have faith in the Lord Jesus, a daily meditation on death, a contempt of the world; a longing desire after heaven; patience in our sorrows; comfort in our sicknesses; joy in God; a holy life and a blessed death; that our souls may rest in hope, and our bodies may rise in glory, and both may be beatified in the communion of saints, in the kingdom of God, and the glories of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

The Blessing.

Now the God of peace,* that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Doxology.

To the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings,† and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

AFTER the sick man is departed, the minister, if he be present, or master of the house, or any other fit person, may use the following prayers in behalf of themselves.

A PRAYER TO BE SAID IN THE CASE OF A SUDDEN THREATENING OF DEATH, WHEN THE FORMS AND SOLEMNITIES OF PREPARATION CANNOT BE USED.

O MOST gracious Father, Lord of heaven and earth, Judge of the living and the dead, behold thy servants running to thee for pity and mercy, in behalf of ourselves, and this thy servant, whom thou hast smitten with thy hasty rod, and a swift angel; if it be thy will, preserve his life, that there may be place for his repentance and restitution: O spare him a little, that he may recover his strength, before he go hence and be no more seen. But if thou hast otherwise decreed, let the miracles of thy compassion and thy wonderful mercy supply to him the want of the usual measures of time, and the periods of repentance, and the trimming of his lamp; and let the greatness of the calamity be accepted by thee, as an instrument to procure pardon

* Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

† 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

for those defects and degrees of unreadiness, which may have caused this accident upon thy servant. Lord, stir up in him a great and effectual contrition; that the greatness of the sorrow, and hatred against sin, and the zeal of his love to thee, may, in a short time, do the work of many days. And thou who regardest the heart and the measures of the mind more than the delay and the measures of time, let it be thy pleasure to rescue the soul of thy servant from all the evils he hath deserved, and all the evils that he fears; that in the glorifications of eternity, and the songs which to eternal ages thy saints and holy angels shall sing to the honour of thy mighty name and invaluable mercies, it may be reckoned among thy glories, that thou hadst redeemed this soul from the dangers of an eternal death, and made him partaker of the gift of God, eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OF THE CONTINGENCIES AND TREATINGS OF OUR DEPARTED
FRIENDS, IN ORDER TO THEIR BURIAL, &c.

WHEN we have received the last breath of our friend, and closed his eyes, and composed his body for the grave, then seasonable is the counsel of the son of Sirach; "Weep bitterly, and make great moan, and use lamentation, as he is worthy; and that a day or two, lest thou be evil spoken of; and then comfort thyself for thy heaviness. But take no grief to heart; for there is no turning again: thou shalt not do him good, but hurt thyself." Solemn and appointed mournings are good expressions of our dear-ness to the departed soul, and of his worth and our value of him; and it hath its praise in nature, and in manners, and in public customs: but the praise of it is not in the gospel, that is, it hath no direct and proper uses in religion. For if the dead did die in the Lord, then there is joy to him, and it is an ill expression of our affection and our charity, to weep uncomfortably at a change that hath carried my friend to the state of a huge felicity. But if the man did perish in his folly and his sins, there is indeed cause to mourn, but no hopes of being comforted; for he shall never return to light, or to hopes of restitution: therefore beware, lest thou also come into the same place of torment; and let thy grief sit down and rest upon thy won turf, and weep till a shower springs from thy eyes to heal the wounds of thy spirit; turn thy sorrow into caution, thy grief for him that is dead, to thy care for thyself who art alive, lest thou die and fall like one of the fools, whose life is worse than death, and their death is the consummation of all felicities. Nothing but our own loss can justly be deplored: and him that is passionate for the loss of his money or his advantages, we esteem foolish and imperfect; and therefore have no reason to love the immoderate sorrows of those who too earnestly mourn for their dead, when, in the last resolution of the inquiry, it is their own evil and present or feared inconveniences they deplore: the best that can be said of such a grief, is, that those mourners love themselves too well. Something is to be given to custom, something to fame, to nature, and to civilities, and to the honour of the deceased friends; for that man is esteemed to die miserable, for whom

no friend or relative sheds a tear, or pays a solemn sigh. I desire to die a *dry death*, but am not very desirous to have a *dry funeral*: some flowers sprinkled upon my grave would do well and comely; and a soft shower to turn those flowers into a springing memory or a fair rehearsal, that I may not go forth of my doors, as my servants carry the entrails of beasts.

But that which is to be faulted in this particular is, when the grief is immoderate and unreasonable: and Paula Romana deserved to have felt the weight of St Jerome's severe reproof, when at the death of every of her children she almost wept herself into her grave. But it is worse yet, when people, by an ambitious and a pompous sorrow, and by ceremonies invented for the ostentation of their grief, fill heaven and earth with exclamations, and grow troublesome, because their friend is happy, or themselves want his company. It is certainly a sad thing in nature to see a friend trembling with a palsy, or scorched with fevers, or dried up like a potsherd with immoderate heats, and rolling upon his uneasy bed without sleep, which cannot be invited with music, or pleasant murmurs, or a decent stillness; nothing but the servants of cold death, Poppy and Weariness, can tempt the eyes to let their curtains down; and then they sleep only to taste of death, and make an essay of the shades below: and yet we weep not here: the period and opportunity for tears we choose, when our friend is fallen asleep, when he hath laid his neck upon the lap of his mother, and let his head down, to be raised up to heaven. This grief is ill placed and indecent. But many times it is worse: and it hath been many times observed, that those greater and stormy passions do so spend the whole stock of grief, that they presently admit a comfort and contrary affection, while a sorrow that is even and temperate, goes on to its period with expectation and the distances of a just time. But so have I seen a crowd of disordered people rush violently and in heaps, till their utmost border was restrained by a wall, or had spent the fury of the first fluctuation and watery progress, and by and by it returned to the contrary with the same earnestness, only because it was violent and ungoverned. A raging passion is this crowd, which when it is not under discipline and the conduct of reason, and the proportions of temperate humanity, runs passionately the way it happens, and by and by as greedily to another side, being swayed by its own weight, and driven any whither by chance, in all its pursuits having no rule, but to do all it can, and spend itself in haste, and expire with some shame and much indecency.

When thou hast wept awhile, compose the body to burial: which that it be done gravely, decently, and charitably, we have the example of all nations to engage us, and of all ages of the world to warrant: so that it is against common honesty, and public fame and reputation, not to do this office.

It is good that the body be kept veiled and secret, and not exposed to curious eyes, or the dishonours wrought by the changes of death discerned and stared upon by impertinent persons. When Cyrus was dying, he called his sons and friends to take their leave, to touch his hand, and to see him the last time; and gave in charge, that when he had put his veil over his face no man should uncover it; let it be entered after the manner of the country, and the laws of the place, and the dignity of the person. For so Jacob was buried with great solemnity, and Joseph's bones were carried into Canaan, after they had been embalmed and kept four hundred years; and devout men carried St Stephen to his burial, making great lamentation

over him. It was noted for piety in the men of Jabesh-Gilead, that they showed kindness to their lord Saul and buried him; and they did it honourably. And our blessed Saviour, who was temperate in his expense, and grave in all the parts of his life and death, as age and sobriety itself, yet was pleased to admit the cost of Mary's ointment upon his head and feet, because she did it against his burial: and though she little thought it had been so nigh, yet because he accepted it for that end, he knew he had made her apology sufficient: by which he remarked it to be a great act of piety, and honourable, to inter our friends and relatives according to the proportions of their condition, and so to give a testimony of our hope of their resurrection. So far is piety: beyond it may be the ostentation and bragging of a grief, or a design to serve worse ends. Such was that of Herod, when he made too studied and elaborate a funeral for Aristobulus, whom he had murdered; and of Regulus for his boy, at whose pile he killed dogs, nightingales, parrots, and little horses: and such also was the expense of some of the Romans, who, hating their left wealth, gave order by their testament to have huge portions of it thrown into their fires, bathing their locks, which were presently to pass through the fire, with Arabian and Egyptian liquors, and balsam of Judea. In this, as in every thing else, as our piety must not pass into superstition or vain expense, so neither must the excess be turned into parsimony, and chastised by negligence and impiety to the memory of the dead.

But nothing of this concerns the dead in real and effective purposes; nor is it with care to be provided for by themselves: but it is the duty of the living. For to them it is all one, whether they be carried forth upon a chariot or a wooden bier; whether they rot in the air or in the earth; whether they be devoured by fishes or by worms, by birds or by sepulchral dogs, by water or by fire, or by delay. When Criton asked Socrates how he would be buried, he told him, "I think I shall escape from you, and that you cannot catch me: but so much of me as you can apprehend, use it as you see cause for, and bury it; but however do it according to the laws." There is nothing in this but opinion and the decency of fame to be served. When it is esteemed an honour and the manner of blessed people to descend into the graves of their fathers, there also it is reckoned as a curse to be buried in a strange land, or that the birds of the air devour them. Some nations used to eat the bodies of their friends, and esteemed that the most honoured sepulture; but they were barbarous. The magi never buried any, but such as were torn of beasts. The Persians besmeared their dead with wax, and the Egyptians with gums, and with great art did condite the bodies, and laid them in charnel-houses. But Cyrus the elder would none of all this, but gave command, that his body should be interred, not laid in a coffin of gold or silver, but just into the earth, from whence all living creatures receive birth and nourishment, and whither they must return. Among Christians the honour which is valued in the behalf of the dead is, that they be buried in holy ground, that is, appointed cemeteries, in places of religion, there where the field of God is sown with the seeds of the resurrection, that their bodies also may be among the Christians, with whom their hope and their portion are, and shall be for ever. Whatsoever thou doest, all will come to the same at last. This we are sure of; our bodies shall all be restored to our souls hereafter, and in the interval they shall all be turned into dust, by what way soever you or your chance shall dress them. Licinius the freed-

man slept in a marble tomb; but Cato in a little one, Pompey in none; and yet they had the best fate among the Romans, and a memory of the biggest honour. And it may happen, that to want a monument may best preserve their memories, while the succeeding ages shall, by their instances, remember the changes of the world, and the dishonours of death, and the equality of the dead. Ninus the Assyrian had a monument erected, whose height was nine furlongs, and the breadth ten, saith Diodorus: but John the Baptist had more honour, when he was humbly laid in the earth between the bodies of Abdias and Elisæus. And St Ignatius, who was buried in the bodies of lions, and St Polycarp, who was burned to ashes, shall have their bones and their flesh again, with greater comfort than those violent persons who slept among kings, having usurped their thrones when they were alive, and their sepulchres when they were dead.

Concerning doing honour to the dead, the consideration is not long. Anciently the friends of the dead used to make their funeral orations, and what they spake of greater commendation, was pardoned upon the accounts of friendship; but when Christianity seized upon the possession of the world, this charge was devolved upon priests and bishops, and they first kept the custom of the world, and adorned it with the piety of truth and of religion; but they also so ordered it, that it should not be cheap; for they made funeral sermons only at the death of princes, or of such holy persons, "who shall judge the angels." The custom descended, and in the channels mingled with the veins of earth, through which it passed; and now-a-days men that die are commended at a price, and the measure of their legacy is the degree of their virtue. But these things ought not so to be: the reward of the greatest virtue ought not to be prostitute to the doles of common persons, but preserved like laurels and coronets, to remark and encourage the noblest things. Persons of an ordinary life should neither be praised publicly nor reproached in private: for it is an office and charge of humanity to speak no evil of the dead (which, I suppose, is meant concerning things not public and evident); but then neither should our charity to them teach us to tell a lie, or to make a great flame from a heap of rushes and mushrooms, and make orations crammed with the narrative of little observances, and acts of civil, and necessary, and eternal religion.

But that which is most considerable is, that we should do something for the dead, something that is real, and of proper advantage. That we perform their will, the laws oblige us, and will see to it; but that we do all those parts of personal duty, which our dead left unperformed, and to which the laws do not oblige us, is an act of great charity and perfect kindness.

Besides this, let us right their causes, and assert their honour. When Marcus Regulus had injured the memory of Herennius Senecio, Metius Carus asked him, what he had to do with his dead; and became his advocate after death of whose cause he was patron when he was alive. And David added this also, that he did kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake: and Solomon pleaded his father's cause by the sword against Joab and Shimei. And certainly it is the noblest thing in the world to do an act of kindness to him whom we shall never see, but yet hath deserved it of us, and to whom we would do it if he were present; and unless we do so, our charity is mercenary, and our friendships are direct merchandise, and our gifts are brokerage: but what we do to the dead or to the living, for their sakes, is gratitude, and virtue for virtue's sake, and the noblest portion of humanity.

And yet I remember, that the most excellent prince Cyrus, in his last exhortation to his sons, upon his deathbed, charms them into peace and union of hearts and designs, by telling them, that his soul would be still alive, and therefore fit to be revered and accounted as awful and venerable, as when he was alive: and what we do to our dead friends, is not done to persons undiscerning as a fallen tree, but to such who better attend to their relatives, and to greater purposes, though in other manner than they did here below. And therefore those wise persons, who, in their funeral orations made their doubt, with an "If the dead have any perception of what is done below," which are the words of Isocrates, in the funeral encomium of Evagoras, did it upon the uncertain opinion of the soul's immortality; but made no question, if they were living, they did also understand what could concern them. The same words Nazianzen uses at the exequies of his sister Gorgonia, and in the former invective against Julian: but this was upon another reason; even because it was uncertain, what the state of separation was, and whether our dead perceive any thing of us, till we shall meet in the day of judgment. If it was uncertain, then, it is certain since that time, we have had no new revelation concerning it; but it is ten to one but, when we die, we shall find the state of affairs wholly differing from all our opinions here, and that no man or sect hath guessed any thing at all of it, as it is. Here I intend not to dispute, but to persuade; and therefore in the general, if it be probable, that they know or feel the benefits done to them, though but by a reflex revelation from God, or some under-communication from an angel, or the stock of acquired notices here below, it may the rather endear us to our charities or duties to them respectively; since our virtues use not to live upon abstractions, and metaphysical perfections, or inducements, but then thrive, when they have material arguments, such which are not too far from sense. However it be, it is certain they are not dead; and though we no more see the souls of our dead friends, than we did, when they were alive, yet we have reason to believe them to know more things and better: and if our sleep be an image of death, we may also observe concerning it, that it is a state of life so separate from communications with the body, that it is one of the ways of oracle and prophecy by which the soul best declares her immortality, and the nobleness of her actions and powers, if she could get free from the body (as in the state of separation, or a clear dominion over it), as in the resurrection. To which also this consideration may be added, that men a long time live the life of sense, before they use their reason; and till they have furnished their head with experiments and notices of many things, they cannot at all discourse of any thing: but when they come to use their reason, all their knowledge is nothing but remembrance; and we know by proportions, by similitudes and dissimilitudes, by relations and oppositions, by causes and effects, by comparing things with things; all which are nothing but operations of understanding upon the stock of former notices, of something we knew before; nothing but remembrances: all the heads of topics, which are the stock of all arguments and sciences in the world, are a certain demonstration of this; and he is the wisest man that remembers most, and joins those remembrances together to the best purposes of discourse. From whence it may not be improbably gathered, that in the state of separation, if there be any act of understanding, that is, if the understanding be alive, it must be relative to the notices it had in this world; and therefore the

acts of it must be discourses upon all the parts and persons of their conversation and relation, excepting only such new revelation, which may be communicated to it; concerning which we know nothing. But if by seeing Socrates I think upon Plato, and by seeing a picture I remember a man, and by beholding two friends, I remember my own and my friend's need (and he is wisest that draws most lines from the same centre, and most discourses from the same notices;) it cannot but be very probable to believe, since the separate souls understand better, if they understand at all, that from the notices they carried from hence, and what they find there equal or unequal to those notices they can better discover the things of their friends, than we can here by our conjectures and craftiest imaginations: and yet many men here can guess shrewdly at the thoughts and designs of such men with whom they discourse, or of whom they have heard, or whose characters they prudently have perceived. I have no other end in this discourse, but that we may be engaged to do our duty to our dead; lest peradventure they should perceive our neglect, and be witnesses of our transient affections and forgetfulness. Dead persons have religion passed upon them, and a solemn reverence: and if we think a ghost beholds us, it may be, we may have upon us the impressions likely to be made by love, and fear, and religion. However, we are sure that God sees us, and the world sees us: and if it be matter of duty towards our dead, God will exact it; if it be matter of kindness, the world will: and as religion is the band of that, so fame and reputation are the endearment of this.

It remains, that we who are alive, should so live, and by the actions of religion attend the coming of the day of the Lord, that we neither be surprised, nor leave our duties imperfect, nor our sins uncanceled, nor our persons unreconciled, nor God unappeased; but that, when we descend to our graves, we may rest in the bosom of the Lord, till the mansions be prepared, where we shall sing and feast eternally. Amen.

DEDICATION OF THE DISCOURSE ON THE LIBERTY OF PROPHE- SYING.—A DEFENCE OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

TO THE RIGHT HON. CHRISTOPHER LORD HATTON,

BARON HATTON OF KIRBY, COMPTROLLER OF HIS MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD, AND ONE OF HIS
MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

MY LORD,—In this great storm, which hath dashed the vessel of the church all to pieces, I have been cast upon the coast of Wales, and, in a little boat, thought to have enjoyed that rest and quietness, which, in England, in a greater, I could not hope for. Here I cast anchor, and thinking to ride safely, the storm followed me with so impetuous violence that it broke a cable, and I lost my anchor; and here again I was exposed to the mercy of the sea, and the gentleness of an element that could neither distinguish things nor persons. And but that he who stilleth the raging of the sea; and the noise of his waves, and the madness of his people, had provided a plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study.

But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy : for the barbarous people showed us no little kindness; for, having kindled a fire, they received us all because of the present rain and the cold. And now since I have come ashore, I have been gathering a few sticks to warm me, a few books to entertain my thoughts, and divert them from the perpetual meditation of my private troubles and the public dyscrasy : but those which I could obtain were so few, and so impertinent, and unuseful to any great purposes, that I began to be sad upon a new stock, and full of apprehension that I should live unprofitably, and die obscurely, and be forgotten, and my bones thrown into some common charnel-house, without any name or note to distinguish me from those who only served their generation, by filling the number of citizens. While I was troubled with these thoughts, and busy to find an opportunity of doing some good, in my small proportion, still the cares of the public did so intervene, that it was impossible to separate my design from relating to the present, as to exempt myself from the participation of the common calamity; still half my thoughts was, in despite of all my diversions and arts of avocations, fixed upon, and mingled with, the present concernments; so that besides them I could not go. Now because the great question is concerning religion, and in that also my scene lies, I resolved here to fix my considerations; especially when I observed the ways of promoting the several opinions, which now are busy, to be such, as besides that they were most troublesome to me, and such as I could, by no means, be friends withal, they were also such as, to my understanding, did the most apparently disserve their ends, whose design in advancing their own opinions was pretended for religion. For as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, as tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of the Christian religion. And however there be some exterminating spirits, who think God to delight in human sacrifices, yet if they were capable of cool and tame homilies, or would hear men of other opinions give a quiet account, without invincible resolutions never to alter their persuasions, I am very much persuaded it would not be very hard to dispute such men into mercies, and compliances, and tolerations mutual, such, I say, who are zealous for Jesus Christ, than whose doctrine never was any thing more merciful and humane, whose lessons were softer than nard or the juice of the Candian olive. Upon the first apprehension, I designed a discourse to this purpose, with as much greediness as if I had thought it possible, with my arguments, to have persuaded the rough and hard-handed soldiers to have disbanded presently : for I had often thought of the prophecy that in the Gospel "our swords should be turned into plough-shares, and our spears into pruning-hooks;" I knew that no tittle spoken by God's Spirit could return unperformed and ineffectual; and I was certain that such was the excellency of Christ's doctrine, that if men could obey it, Christians should never war one against another : in the mean time, I considered not that it was a prediction of the design, not of the event, till I saw what men were now doing, and ever had done, since the heats and primitive fervours did cool, and the love of interest swelled higher than the love of Christianity : but then, on the other side, I began to fear, that whatever I could say would be as ineffectual as it could be reasonable. For if those excellent words which our blessed Master spake, could not charm the tumult of our spirits, I had little reason to hope that one of the meanest and most ignorant of his servants

could advance the end of that which he calls his great, and his old, and his new commandment, so well as the excellency of his own Spirit and discourses could. And yet since he who knew every event of things, and the success and efficacy of every doctrine, and that very much of it to most men, and all of it to some men, would be ineffectual, yet was pleased to consign our duty, that it might be a direction to them that would, and a conviction and a testimony against them that would not obey; I thought it might not misbecome my duty and endeavours to plead for peace and charity, and forgiveness and permissions mutual: although I had reason to believe, that such is the iniquity of men, and they so indisposed to receive such impresses, that I had as good plough the sands, or till the air, as persuade such doctrines, which destroy men's interests, and serve no end but the great end of a happy eternity, and what is in order to it. But because the events of things are in God's disposition, and I knew them not,—and because if I had known, my good purposes would be totally ineffectual as to others, yet my own designation and purposes would be of advantage to myself, who might, from God's mercy, expect the retribution which he is pleased to promise to all pious intendments; I resolved to encounter with all objections, and to do something to which I should be determined by the consideration of the present distemperatures and necessities, by my own thoughts, by the questions and scruples, the sects and names, the interests and animosities, which at this day, and for some years past, have exercised and disquieted Christendom.

Thus far I discourse myself into employment, and having come thus far, I knew not how to get further; for I had heard of a great experience, how difficult it was to make brick without straw: and here I had even seen my design blasted in the bud, and I despaired, in the calends, of doing what I purposed in the ides before. For I had no books of my own here, nor any in the vicinage; and but that I remembered the result of some of those excellent discourses I had heard your Lordship make, when I was so happy as, in private, to gather up what your temperance and modesty forbids to be public, I had come unarmed to the combat, and, like enough, might have fared accordingly. I had this only advantage besides, that I have chosen a subject, in which, if my own reason does not abuse me, I needed no other books or aids than what a man carries with him on horseback, I mean, the common principles of Christianity, and those axioms which men use in the transactions of the ordinary occurrences of civil society: and upon the strength of them, and some other collateral assistances, I have run through it in some sort; and the sum of the following discourses is nothing but the sense of these words of Scripture, that since "we know in part, and prophesy in part, and that now we see through a glass darkly,"* we would not despise or condemn persons not so knowing as ourselves, but "him that is weak in the faith, we should receive, but not to doubtful disputations;"† therefore, certainly to charity, and not to vexations, not to those which are the idle effects of impertinent wranglings. And provided they keep close to the foundation, which is faith and obedience, let them build upon this foundation matter more or less precious, yet if the foundation be entire, they shall be saved with or without loss. And since we profess ourselves servants of so meek a Master, and disciples

* 1 Cor. xiii.

† Rom. xiv.

of so charitable an institute, "Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;"* for this is the best endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, when it is fast tied in the bond of peace. And although it be a duty of Christianity, that "we all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;"† yet this unity is to be estimated according to the unity of faith, in things necessary, in matters of creed, and articles fundamental; for as for other things, it is more to be wished than to be hoped for. There are some "doubtful disputations,"‡ and in such 'the scribe, the wise, the disputer of this world,' are, most commonly, very far from certainty, and many times, from truth. There are diversity of persuasions in matters adiaphorous, as meats, and drinks, and holidays, &c., and both parties, the affirmative and the negative, affirm and deny with innocence enough; for the observer, and he that observes not, intend both to God; and God is our common Master, we are all fellow servants, and not the judge of each other in matters of conscience or doubtful disputation; and every man that 'hath faith, must have it to himself before God,' but no man must, in such matters either 'judge his brother or set him at nought:' but 'let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.' And the way to do that is not by knowledge, but by charity; for "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."§ And since there is not in "every man the same knowledge, but the consciences of some are weak;"|| as "my liberty must not be judged of another man's weak conscience,"¶ so must not I please myself so much in my right opinion, but I must also take order that his 'weak conscience be not offended or despised:' for no man must 'seek his own, but every man another's wealth.'** And although 'we must contend earnestly for the faith,' yet, 'above all things, we must put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.' And, therefore, this contention must be with arms fit for the Christian warfare, "the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, and preparation of the Gospel of peace, instead of shoes, and a helmet of salvation."†† But not with other arms; for a churchman must not be 'a striker;' for "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual," and the persons that use them, ought to be 'gentle, and easy to be entreated;' and we 'must give an account of our faith to them that ask us, with meekness and humility, for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' These, and thousands more to the same purpose, are the doctrines of Christianity, whose sense and intentment I have prosecuted in the following discourse, being very much displeased that so many opinions and new doctrines are commenced among us; but more troubled, that every man that hath an opinion, thinks his own and other men's salvation is concerned in its maintenance; but most of all, that men should be persecuted and afflicted for disagreeing in such opinions, which they cannot, with sufficient grounds, obtrude upon others necessarily. because they cannot propound them infallibly, and because they have no warrant from Scripture so to do. For if I shall tie other men to believe my opinion, because I think I have a place of Scripture, which seems to

* Ephes. iv. 2, 3. † 1 Cor. i. 10. ‡ Rom. xiv. § 1 Cor. viii. 1. || Ver. 7.
 ¶ 1 Cor. x. 29. ** Ibid. ver. 33. †† Colos. iii. 14.

warrant it to my understanding, why may not he serve up another dish to me in the same dress, and exact the same task of me to believe the contradictory? And then, since all the heretics in the world have offered to prove their articles by the same means by which true believers propound theirs, it is necessary that some separation, either of doctrine or of persons, be clearly made, and that all pretences may not be admitted, nor any just allegations be rejected; and yet, that in some other questions, whether they be truly or falsely pretended, if not evidently or demonstratively, there may be considerations had to the persons of men, and to the laws of charity, more than to the triumphing in any opinion or doctrine not simply necessary. Now, because some doctrines are clearly not necessary, and some are absolutely necessary, why may not the first separation be made upon this difference, and articles necessary be only urged as necessary, and the rest left to men indifferently, as they were by the Scripture indeterminately? And it were well if men would as much consider themselves as the doctrines, and think that they may as well be deceived by their own weakness, as persuaded by the arguments of a doctrine, which other men, as wise, call inevident. For it is a hard case that we should think all papists, and anabaptists, and sacramentaries, to be fools and wicked persons: certainly, among all these sects, there are very many wise men and good men, as well as erring. And although some zeals are so hot, and their eyes so inflamed with their ardours, that they do not think their adversaries look like other men; yet certainly we find by the results of their discourses, and the transactions of their affairs of civil society, that they are men that speak and make syllogisms, and use reason, and read Scripture: and although they do no more understand all of it than we do, yet they endeavour to understand as much as concerns them, even all that they can, even all that concerns repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And, therefore, methinks this also should be another consideration distinguishing the persons: for if the persons be Christians in their lives, and Christians in their profession, if they acknowledge the eternal Son of God for their Master and their Lord, and live in all relations as becomes persons making such professions, why then should I hate such persons whom God loves, and who love God, who are partakers of Christ, and Christ hath a title to them, who dwell in Christ, and Christ in them, because their understandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the same masters, they have not met with the same books, nor the same company, or have not the same interest, or are not so wise, or else are wiser; that is, for some reason or other, which I neither do understand nor ought to blame,—have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their school-questions to the sense of my sect or interest?

But now, I know beforehand, that those men who will endure none but their own sect, will make all manner of attempts against these purposes of charity and compliance, and, say I or do I what I can, will tell all their proselytes that I preach indifferency of religion; that I say it is no matter how we believe, nor what they profess, but that they may comply with all sects, and do violence to their own consciences; that they may be saved in all religions, and so make way for a ‘colluvies’ of heresies, and by consequence, destroy all religion. Nay, they will say worse than all this; and, but that I am not used to their phrases and forms of declamation, I am persuaded I might represent fine tragedies beforehand. And this will be such

an objection, that although I am most confident I shall make it apparent to be as false and scandalous as the objectors themselves are zealous and impatient; yet besides that I believe the objection will come where my answers will not come, or not be understood, I am also confident, that, in defiance and incuriousness of all that I shall say, some men will persist pertinaciously in the accusation, and deny my conclusion in despite of me. Well : but however, I will try.

And, first, I answer, that whatsoever is against the foundation of faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive to human society, and the public and just interests of bodies politic, is out of the limits of my question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration : so that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those religions whose principles destroy government, nor to those religions (if there be any such) that teach ill life; nor do I think that any thing will now excuse from belief of a fundamental article, except stupidity or sottishness, and natural inability. This alone is sufficient answer to this vanity; but I have much more to say.

Secondly; the intendment of my discourse is, that permissions should be in questions speculative, indeterminable, curious, and unnecessary; and that men would not make more necessities than God made, which indeed are not many. The fault I find and seek to remedy, is, that men are so dogmatical and resolute in their opinions, and impatient of others disagreeing, in those things wherein is no sufficient means of union and determination; but that men should let opinions and problems keep their own forms, and not be obtruded as axioms, nor questions in the vast collection of the system of divinity be adopted into the family of faith. And, I think, I have reason to desire this.

Thirdly; it is hard to say that he who would not have men put to death, or punished corporally for such things for which no human authority is sufficient, either for cognizance or determination, nor competent for infliction, that he persuades to an indifferency, when he refers to another judicatory, which is competent, sufficient, infallible, just, and highly severe. No man, or company of men, can judge or punish our thoughts or secret purposes, whilst they so remain. And yet it will be unequal to say, that he who owns this doctrine, preaches it lawful for men to think or purpose what they will. And so it is in matters of doubtful disputation, such as are the distinguishing articles of most of the sects of Christendom; so it is in matters intellectual, which are not cognizable by a secular power; in matters spiritual, which are to be discerned by spiritual authority, which cannot make corporal inflictions; and in questions indeterminate, which are doubtfully propounded, or obscurely, and, therefore, may be, on either side, disputed or believed.

For God alone must be Judge of these matters, who alone is Master of our souls, and hath a dominion over human understanding; and he that says this, does not say that indifferency is persuaded, because God alone is Judge of erring persons.

Fourthly : no part of this discourse teaches or encourages variety of sects, and contradiction in opinions, but supposes them already in being : and, therefore, since there are, and ever were, and ever will be, variety of opinions, because there is variety of human understandings, and uncertainty in things, no man should be too forward in determining all questions, nor so forward in prescribing to others; nor invade that liberty which God hath

left to us entire, by propounding many things obscurely, and by exempting our souls and understandings from all power externally compulsory. So that the restraint is laid upon men's tyranny, but no license given to men's opinions; they are not considered in any of the conclusions, but in the premises only, as an argument to exhort to charity. So that if I persuade a license of discrediting any thing which God hath commanded us to believe, and allow a liberty where God hath not allowed it, let it be shown, and let the objection press as hard as it can: but to say that men are too forward in condemning, where God hath declared no sentence, nor prescribed any rule, is to dissuade from tyranny, not to encourage licentiousness; is to take away a license of judging, not to give a license of dogmatizing what every one pleases, or as may best serve his turn. And for the other part of the objection:

Fifthly; this discourse is so far from giving leave to men to profess any thing, though they believe the contrary, that it takes order that no man shall be put to it: for I earnestly contend that another man's opinion shall be no rule to mine, and that my opinion shall be no snare and prejudice to myself; that men use one another so charitably and so gently, that no error or violence tempt men to hypocrisy: this very thing being one of the arguments I use to persuade permissions, lest compulsion introduce hypocrisy, and make sincerity troublesome and unsafe.

Sixthly; if men would not call all opinions by the name of religion, and superstructures by the name of fundamental articles, and all fancies by the glorious appellative of faith, this objection would have no pretence or footing: so that it is the disease of the men, not any cause that is ministered by such precepts of charity, that makes them perpetually clamorous. And it would be hard to say that such physicians are incurious of their patients, and neglectful of their health, who speak against the unreasonableness of such empirics, that would cut off a man's head, if they see but a wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to distinguish him from another man: the case is altogether the same, and we may as well decree a wart to be mortal, as a various opinion, in a thing otherwise not necessary, to be capital and damnable.

For I consider that there are but few doctrines of Christianity that were ordered to be preached to all the world, to every single person, and made a necessary article of his explicit belief. Other doctrines, which are all of them not simply necessary, are either such as are not clearly revealed, or such as are. If they be clearly revealed, and that I know so too, or may, but for my own fault,—I am not to be excused: but for this I am to be left to God's judgment, unless my fault be externally such as to be cognizable and punishable in human judicatory. But, then, if it be not so revealed, but that wise men and good men differ in their opinions, it is a clear case it is not among dogmas simply necessary; and then it is certain I may, therefore, safely disbelieve it, because I may be safely ignorant of it. For if I may, with innocence, be ignorant, then to know it, or believe it, is not simply obligatory: ignorance is absolutely inconsistent with such an obligation, because it is destructive and a plain negative to its performance; and if I do my honest endeavour to understand it, and yet do not attain it, it is certain that it is not obligatory to me so much as by accident; for no obligation can press the person of a man, if it be impossible; no man is bound to do more than his best; no man is bound to have an excellent

understanding, or to be infallible, or to be wiser than he can: for these are things that are not in his choice, and therefore not a matter of law, nor subject to reward and punishment. So that where ignorance of the article is not a sin, their disbelieving it in the right sense, or believing it in the wrong, is not a breach of any duty essentially or accidentally necessary, either in the thing itself, or to the person; that is, he is neither bound to the article, nor to any endeavours or antecedent acts of volition and choice; and that man who may safely be ignorant of the proposition, is not tied at all to search it out; and if not at all to search it, then certainly not to find it. All the obligation we are capable of is, not to be malicious or voluntarily criminal in any kind: and, then, if by accident we find out a truth, we are obliged to believe it; and so will every wise or good man do; indeed he cannot do otherwise. But if he disbelieves an article, without malice or design, or involuntarily or unknowingly, it is a contradiction to say it is a sin to him, who might totally have been ignorant of it: for that he believes it in the wrong sense, it is his ignorance; and it is impossible that, where he hath heartily endeavoured to find out a truth, his endeavour should make him guilty of a sin, which would never have been laid to his charge, if he had taken no pains at all. His ignorance, in this case, is not a fault at all; possibly it might, if there had been no endeavour to have cured it.

So that there is wholly a mistake in this proposition. For true it is, there are some propositions, which if a man never hear of, they will not be required by him; and they who cannot read, might safely be ignorant that Melchisedec was king of Salem: but he who reads it in the Scripture, may not safely contradict it, although before that knowledge did arrive to him, he might safely have been ignorant of it. But this, although it be true, is not pertinent to our question: for, in a divisive sense, this is true, that which, at one time, a man may be ignorant of, at some other time he may not disbelieve; but, in a conjunct sense, it is false; for, at what, and in what circumstance soever, it is no sin to be ignorant,—at that time, and in that conjuncture, it is no sin to disbelieve. And such is the nature of all questions disputable, which are, therefore, not required of us to be believed, in any one particular sense, because the nature of the thing is such, as not to be necessary to be known at all, simply and absolutely; and such is the ambiguity and cloud of its face and representment, as not to be necessary, so much as by accident, and, therefore, not to the particular sense of any one person.

And yet, such is the iniquity of men, that they suck in opinions as wild asses do the wind, without distinguishing the wholesome from the corrupted air, and then live upon it at a venture; and when all their confidence is built upon zeal and mistake, yet, therefore, because they are zealous and mistaken, they are impatient of contradiction.

But, besides that against this I have laid prejudice enough, from the dictates of Holy Scripture, it is observable that this, with its appendant degrees, I mean restraint of prophesying, imposing upon other men's understanding, being masters of their consciences, and lording it over the faith, came in with the retinue and train of Antichrist; that is, they came as other abuses and corruptions of the church did, by reason of the iniquity of times, and the cooling of the first heats of Christianity, and the increase of self-interest, and the abatements of Christian simplicity when the church's fortune grew

better, and her sons grew worse, and some of her fathers worst of all. For, in the first three hundred years, there was no sign of persecuting any man for his opinion, though, at that time, there were very horrid opinions commenced, and such which were exemplary and parallel enough to determine this question; for they then were assaulted by new sects, which destroyed the common principles of nature, of Christianity, of innocence, and public society; and they who used all the means, Christian and spiritual, for their disimprovement and conviction, thought not of using corporal force, otherwise than by blaming such proceedings. And, therefore, I do not only urge their not doing it, as an argument of the unlawfulness of such proceeding, but their defying it and speaking against such practices, as unreasonable, and destructive of Christianity. For so Tertullian is express: "It is a part of human right and natural prerogative, that every one should worship as he believes; it is no part of religion to force the religion of others, which ought always to be taken up, not of compulsion, but of free will." The same is the doctrine of St Cyprian, Lactantius, St Hilary, Minutius Felix, Sulpitius Severus, St Chrysostom, St Jerome, St Austin, Damascen, Theophylact, Socrates Scholasticus, and St Bernard, as they are severally referred to and urged, upon occasion, in the following discourse.

To which I add, that all wise princes, till they were overborne with faction, or solicited by peevish persons, gave toleration to differing sects whose opinions did not disturb the public interest. But, at first, there were some heretical persons that were also impatient of an adversary, and they were the men, who at first entreated the emperors to persecute the catholics: but till four hundred years after Christ, no catholic persons or very few, did provoke the secular arm, or implore its aid against the heretics, save only that Arius behaved himself so seditiously and tumultuarly, that the Nicene fathers procured a temporary decree for his relegation; but it was soon taken off, and God left to be his judge; who indeed did it to some purpose, when he was trusted with it, and the matter wholly left to him.

But as the ages grew worse, so men grew more cruel and unchristian: and in the Greek church, Atticus, and Nestorius of Constantinople, Theodosius of Synada, and some few others, who had forgotten the mercies of their great Master, and their own duty, grew implacable, and furious, and impatient of contradiction. It was a bold and an arrogant speech, which Nestorius made in a sermon before Theodosius the younger, "Give me, O emperor, a land cleansed of heretics, and I will give you heaven in return,—with me destroy the heretics, and I with you will destroy the Persians." It was as groundless and unwarrantable, as it was bloody and inhuman.

And we see the contrary events prove truer than this groundless and unlearned promise: for Theodosius and Valentinian were prosperous princes, and have, to all ages, a precious memory, and the reputation of a great piety; but they were so far from doing what Nestorius had suggested, that they restrained him from his violence and inhumanity; and Theodosius did highly commend the good bishop Proclus, for his sweetness of deportment towards erring persons, far above the cruelty of his predecessor Atticus. And the experience which Christendom hath had in this last age, is argument enough that toleration of different opinions is so far from disturbing the public peace, or destroying the interest of princes and commonwealths, that it does advantage to the public; it secures peace, because there is not so much as the

pretence of religion left to such persons to contend for it, being already indulged to them. When France fought against the Huguenots, the spilling of her own blood was argument enough of the imprudence of that way of promoting religion; but since she hath given permission to them, the world is witness how prosperous she hath been ever since. But the great instance is in the differing temper, government, and success, which Margaret of Parma and the duke of Alva had. The clemency of the first had almost extinguished the flame: but when she was removed, D'Alva succeeded, and managed the matter of religion with fire and sword; he made the flame so great, that his religion, and his prince too, have both been almost quite turned out of the country. "Wisdom is taken out of the way, as often as matters are managed with violence," said Ennius: and therefore the best of men, and the most glorious of princes, were always ready to give toleration, but never to make executions for matters disputable. Eusebius, in his second book of the life of Constantine, reports these words of the emperor:—"Let those who err receive with joy an equal fruition of peace and tranquillity with the faithful, since the very restoration of mutual intercourse and society, may have the effect of leading back the former to the way of truth.—Let no one annoy another.—Every man, as he purposeth in his heart so let him do.'"

And indeed there is great reason for princes to give toleration to disagreeing persons, whose opinions, by fair means, cannot be altered. For if the persons be confident, they will serve God according to their persuasions; and if they be publicly prohibited, they will privately convene: and then all these inconveniences and mischiefs, which are arguments against the permission of conventicles, are arguments for the public permissions of differing religions, because the denying of the public worship will certainly produce private conventicles, against which all wise princes and commonwealths have, upon great reasons, made edicts and severe sanctions. Whatsoever is done in the king's absence commonly falls on his own head, say the politics. For the face of a king is as the face of a lion, and scatters all base machinations, which breathe not but in the dark. They who, for their security, run into grots, and cellars, and retirements, think that, they being upon the defensive, those princes and those laws that drive them to it, are their enemies, and, therefore, they cannot be secure, unless the power of one, and the obligation of the other, be lessened and rescinded; and then, the being restrained, and made miserable, endears the discontented persons mutually, and makes more hearty and dangerous confederations. King James, of blessed memory, in his letters to the States of the United provinces, dated 6th March, 1613, thus wrote,—"It will be more to the purpose if such disputations as these are laid asleep, by public authority; if you prohibit your ministers from carrying them to the pulpit, or before the people, and strictly enjoin them to cultivate peace, tolerating one another in their diversity of opinions on these subjects." The like counsel, in the divisions of Germany, at the first reformation, was thought reasonable by the emperor Ferdinand, and his excellent son Maximilian. For they had observed, that violence did exasperate, was unblessed, unsuccessful, and unreasonable; and, therefore, they made decrees of toleration, and appointed tempers and expedients to be drawn up by discreet persons; and George Cassander was designed to this great work, and did something towards it. And Emanuel Philibert, duke of Savoy, repenting of his war, undertaken

for religion, against the Pedemontans, promised them toleration, and was as good as his word. As much is done by the nobility of Polonia. So that the best princes and the best bishops, gave toleration and impunities : but it is known, that the first persecutions of disagreeing persons were, by the Arians, by the Circumcellians and Donatists; and from them they of the church took examples, who in small numbers, did sometimes persuade it, sometimes practise it. And among the Greeks, it became a public and authorized practice, till the question of images grew hot and high : for then the worshippers of images, having taken their example from the empress Irene, who put her son's eyes out for making an edict against images, began to be as cruel as they were deceived; especially being encouraged by the popes of Rome, who then blew the coals to some purpose.

And that I may, upon this occasion, give account of this affair in the church of Rome, it is remarkable, that, till the time of Justinian the emperor, A. D. 525, the catholics and Novatians had churches, indifferently permitted, even in Rome itself; but the bishops of Rome, whose interest was much concerned in it, spoke much against it, and laboured for the eradication of the Novatians, and at last, when they got power into their hands, they served them accordingly : but it is observed by Socrates, that when the first persecution was made against them at Rome, by pope Innocent I., at the same instant the Goths invaded Italy, and became lords of all; it being just in God to bring a persecution upon them for true belief, who, with an incompetent authority and insufficient grounds, do persecute an error less material in persons agreeing with them, in the profession of the same common faith. And I have heard it observed, as a blessing upon St Austin (who was so merciful to erring persons, as, the greatest part of his life, in all senses, even when he had twice changed his mind, yet to tolerate them, and never to endure they should be given over to the secular power to be killed), that the very night the Vandals sat down before his city of Hippo, to besiege it, he died and went to God, being as a reward of his merciful doctrine, taken from the miseries to come. And yet that very thing was also a particular issue of the Divine Providence upon that city, who, not long before, had altered their profession into truth by force, and now were falling into their power, who afterward, by a greater force, turned them to be Arians.

But, in the church of Rome, the popes were the first preachers of force and violence, in matters of opinion, and that so zealously, that pope Vigilius suffered himself to be imprisoned and handled roughly by the emperor Justinian, rather than he would consent to the restitution and peace of certain disagreeing persons. But as yet it came not so far as death. The first that preached that doctrine was Dominic, the founder of the begging orders of friars, the friar-preachers; in memory of which the inquisition is intrusted only to the friars of his order. And if there be any force in dreams, or truth in legends, (as there is not much in either) this very thing might be signified by his mother's dream, who, the night before Dominic was born, dreamed she was brought to bed of a huge dog, with a fire-brand in his mouth. Sure enough, however, his disciples expound the dream, it was a better sign that he should prove a rabid, furious incendiary than any thing else : whatever he might be in the other parts of his life, in his doctrine he was not much better, as appears in his deportment towards the Albigenses, against whom he so preached, " that a hundred thousand heretics

were roasted and slain by eight thousand catholics," saith one of him: and of those who were taken, one hundred and eighty were burnt to death, because they would not abjure their doctrine. This was the first example of putting erring persons to death that I find in the Roman church. For about one hundred and seventy years before, Berengarius fell into opinions, concerning the blessed sacrament, which they called heresy, and recanted, and relapsed, and recanted again, and fell again two or three times, saith Gerson, writing against 'Romant of the rose,' and yet he died his own natural death, and with hope of heaven, though Hildebrand was once his judge: which shows that, at that time, Rome was not come to so great heights of bloodshed. In England, although the pope had as great power here as anywhere, yet there were no executions for matter of opinion known till the time of Henry IV., who, because he usurped the crown, was willing by all means to endear the clergy by destroying their enemies, that so he might be sure of them, to all his purposes. And indeed, it may become them well enough, who are wiser in their generations than the children of light,—it may possibly serve the policies of evil persons, but never the pure and chaste designs of Christianity, which admits no blood but Christ's, and the imitating blood of martyrs, but knows nothing how to serve her ends by persecuting any of her erring children.

By this time, I hope it will not be thought reasonable to say, he that teaches mercy to erring persons teaches indifferency in religion; unless so many fathers, and so many churches, and the best of emperors, and all the world (till they were abused by tyranny, popery, and faction) did teach indifferency. For I have shown that Christianity does not punish corporally persons erring spiritually, but indeed popery does; the Donatists, and Circumcellians and Arians, and the Itaciani, they of old did: in the middle ages the patrons of images did, and the papists at this day do, and have done, ever since they were taught it by their St Dominic.

Seventhly; And yet after all this, I have something more to exempt myself by from the clamour of this objection. For let all errors be as much and as zealously suppressed as may be (the doctrine of the following discourse contradicts not that); but let it be done by such means as are proper instruments of their suppression, by preaching and disputation (so that neither of them breed disturbance,) by charity and sweetness, by holiness of life, assiduity of exhortation, by the word of God and prayer.

For these ways are most natural, most prudent, most peaceable and effectual. Only let not men be hasty, in calling every disliked opinion by the name of heresy; and when they have resolved that they will call it so, let them use the erring person like a brother, not beat him like a dog, or convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understanding and persuasions.

And now if men will still say, 'I persuade to indifferency,' there is no help for me, for I have given reasons against it; I must bear it as well as I can; I am not yet without remedy, as they are; for patience will help me, and reason will not cure them: let them take their course, and I will take mine.

Thus far, I thought I had reason on my side, and I suppose I have made it good, upon its proper grounds. But then, if the result be, that men must be permitted in their opinions, and that Christians must not persecute Christians, I have also as much reason to reprove all those

oblique arts which are not direct persecutions of men's persons, but they are indirect proceedings, ungentle and unchristian, servants of faction and interest, provocations to zeal and animosities, and destructive of learning and ingenuity. And these are, suppressing all the monuments of their adversaries, forcing them to recant, and burning their books.

For it is a strange industry, and an importune diligence that was used by our forefathers; of all those heresies which gave them battle and employment, we have absolutely no record or monument, but what themselves, who are adversaries, have transmitted to us; and we know that adversaries, especially such who observed all opportunities to discredit both the persons and doctrines of the enemy, are not always the best records or witnesses of such transactions. We see it now in this very age, in the present distemperatures, that parties are no good registers of the actions of the adverse side: and if we cannot be confident of the truth of a story now, now I say that it is possible for any man, and likely that the interested adversary will discover the imposture, it is far more unlikely that after ages should know any other truth, but such as serves the ends of the representers. I am sure such things were never taught us by Christ, and his apostles: and if we were sure that ourselves spoke the truth, or that truth were able to justify herself, it were better if, to preserve a doctrine, we did not destroy a commandment, and out of zeal, pretending to Christian religion, lose the glories and rewards of ingenuity and Christian simplicity.

Of the same consideration is mending of authors, not to their own mind, but to ours, that is, to mend them so as to spoil them; forbidding the publication of books in which there is nothing impious or against the public interest, leaving out clauses in translations, disgracing men's persons, charging disavowed doctrines upon men, and the persons of the men with the consequents of their doctrine, which they deny either to be true or to be consequent; false reporting of disputations and conferences, burning books by the hand of the hangman, and all such arts, which show that we either distrust God for the maintenance of his truth, or that we distrust the cause, or distrust ourselves and our abilities. I will say no more of these, but only concerning the last I shall transcribe a passage out of Tacitus, in the life of Julius Agricola, who gives this account of it: "we have it upon record that Arulenus Rusticus, for the panegyric of Pætus Thrasea, and Herennius Senecio for that of Helvidius Priscus were both capitally convicted: nor was it enough that these excellent authors fell a sacrifice to the tyrant's power; persecution raged against their books, and by an order to the triumvirs, in the forum and the place of popular convention, the monuments of genius perished in the flames. The policy of the times no doubt intended that in the same fire, the voice of the Roman people should be stifled, the freedom of the senate destroyed and the sentiments of the human heart suppressed for ever." It is but an illiterate policy to think that such indirect and uningenious proceedings, can, among wise and free men, disgrace the authors, and disrepute their discourses. And I have seen that the price hath been trebled upon a forbidden, or a condemned book; and some men in policy have got a prohibition, that their impression might be the more certainly vendible, and the author himself thought considerable.

The best way is to leave tricks and devices, and to fall upon that way which the best ages of the church did use. With the strength of argument, and allegations of Scripture, and modesty of deportment, and meekness and charity to the persons of men, they converted misbelievers, stopped the

mouths of adversaries, asserted truth, and discountenanced error; and those other stratagems and acts of support and maintenance to doctrines, were the issues of heretical brains. The old catholics had nothing to secure themselves but the one great instrument of truth and plain dealing.

And to my understanding, it is a plain art and design of the devil, to make us so in love with our own opinions, as to call them faith and religion, that we may be proud in our understanding: and besides that, by our zeal in our opinions, we grow cool in our piety and practical duties; he also by this earnest contention, does directly destroy good life, by engagement of zealots to do any thing rather than be overcome, and lose their beloved propositions. But I would fain know, why is not any vicious habit as bad, or worse than a false opinion? Why are we so zealous against those we call heretics, and yet great friends with drunkards, fornicators, and swearers, and intemperate and idle persons! Is it because we are commanded by the apostle to 'reject a heretic after two admonitions, and not bid such a one God-speed?' It is good reason why we should be zealous against such persons, provided we mistake them not. For those of whom these apostles speak, are such as deny Christ to be come in the flesh, such as deny an article of creed; and in such odious things, it is not safe, nor charitable, to extend the *gravamen* and punishment beyond the instances the apostles make, or their exact parallels. But then also it would be remembered that the apostles speak as fiercely against communion with fornicators, and all disorders practical, as against communion with heretics: "If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat." I am certain that a drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives as contrary to the laws of Christianity as a heretic; and I am also sure that I know what drunkenness is: but I am not sure that such or such an opinion is heresy; neither would other men be so sure as they think, if they did consider it aright, and observe the infinite deceptions, and causes of deceptions, in wise men, and in most things, and in all doubtful questions, and that they did not mistake confidence for certainty.

But, indeed, I could not but smile at those jolly friars; two Franciscans offered themselves to the fire, to prove Savonarola to be a heretic; but a certain jacobine offered himself to the fire, to prove that Savonarola had true revelations, and was no heretic: in the mean time Savonarola preached, but made no such confident offer, nor durst he venture at that new kind of fire-ordeal. And, put case all four had passed through the fire, and died in the flames, what would that have proved? Had he been a heretic or no heretic, the more or less, for the confidence of these zealous idiots? If we mark it, a great many arguments whereon sects rely, are no better probation than this comes to. Confidence is the first, and the second, and the third part, of a very great many of their propositions.

But now if men would a little turn the tables, and be as zealous for a good life, and all the strictest precepts of Christianity (which is a religion the most holy, the most reasonable, and the most consummate that ever was taught to man), as they are for such propositions in which neither the life nor the ornament of Christianity is concerned, we should find that, as a consequent of this piety, men would be as careful as they could to find out all truths, and the sense of all revelations which may concern their duty; and where men were miserable and could not, yet others that lived good lives

too, would also be so charitable, as not to add affliction to this misery : and both of them are parts of good life. To be compassionate, and to help to bear one another's burdens, not to destroy the weak, but to entertain him meekly, that is a precept of charity; and to endeavour to find out the whole will of God, that also is a part of the obedience, the choice and the excellency of faith : and he lives not a good life that does not do both these.

But men think they have more reason to be zealous against heresy, than against a vice in manners; because heresy is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil. Indeed, if by a heresy we mean that which is against an article of creed, and breaks part of the covenant made between God and man, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, I grant it to be a very grievous crime, a calling God's veracity into question, and a destruction also of good life; because upon the articles of creed, obedience is built, and it lives, or dies, as the effect does by its proper cause,—for faith is the moral cause of obedience. But then heresy, that is such as this, is also a vice, and the person criminal, and so the sin is to be esteemed in its degrees of malignity; and let men be as zealous against it as they can, and employ the whole arsenal of the spiritual armour against it : such as this is worse than adultery or murder, inasmuch as the soul is more noble than the body, and a false doctrine is of greater dissemination and extent than a single act of violence or impurity. Adultery or murder is a duel; but heresy (truly and indeed such) is an unlawful war,—it slays thousands. The losing of faith is like digging down a foundation; all the superstructures of hope, and patience, and charity, fall with it. And besides this, heresy of all crimes is the most inexcusable, and of least temptation : for true faith is most commonly kept with the least trouble of any grace in the world; and heresy of itself hath not only no pleasure in it, but is a very punishment; because faith, as it opposes heretical or false opinions, and distinguishes from charity, consists in mere acts of believing; which, because they are of true propositions, are natural and proportionable to the understanding, and more honourable than false. But then, concerning those things which men now-a-days call heresy, they cannot be so formidable as they are represented; and if we consider that drunkenness is certainly a damnable sin, and that there are more drunkards than heretics, and that drunkenness is parent of a thousand vices, it may better be said of this vice than of most of those opinions which we call heresies, 'it is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil;' and, therefore, as fit an object for a pious zeal to contest against, as is any of those opinions which trouble men's ease or reputation, for that is the greatest of their malignity.

But if we consider that sects are made, and opinions are called heresies upon interest, and the grounds of emolument, we shall see that a good life would cure much of this mischief. For first, the church of Rome, which is the great dictatrix of dogmatical resolutions, and the declarer of heresy, and calls heretic more than all the world besides, hath made that the rule of heresy, which is the conservatory of interest and the ends of men. For, to recede from the doctrine of the church, with them, makes heresy; that is, to disrepute their authority, and not to obey them, not to be their subjects, not to give them the empire of our conscience, is the great criterion of heresy.

So that, with them, heresy is to be esteemed clearly by human ends, not by Divine rules; that is formal heresy, which does materially disserve them.

And it would make a suspicious man a little inquisitive into their particular doctrines : and when he finds that indulgences, and jubilees, and purgatories, and masses, and offices for the dead, are very profitable,—that the doctrine of primacy, of infallibility, of superiority over councils, of indirect power in temporals, are great instruments of secular honour; he would be apt enough to think that if the church of Rome would learn to lay her honour at the feet of the crucifix, and despise the world, and prefer Jerusalem before Rome, and heaven above the Lateran, that these opinions would not have in them any native strength to support them against the perpetual assaults of their adversaries, that speak so much reason and Scripture against them, I have instanced in the Roman religion, but I wish it may be considered also, how far men's doctrines in other sects, serve men's temporal ends; so far that it would not be unreasonable or unnecessary to attempt to cure some of their distemperatures or mispersuasions, by the salutary precepts of sanctity and holy life. Sure enough, if it did not more concern their reputation, and their lasting interest, to be counted true believers rather than good livers, they would rather endeavour to live well, than to be accounted of a right opinion in things beside the creed.

For my own particular, I cannot but expect that God, in his justice, should enlarge the bounds of the Turkish empire, or some other way punish Christians, by reason of their pertinacious disputing about things unnecessary, undeterminable, and unprofitable, and for their hating and persecuting their brethren, which should be as dear to them as their own lives, for not consenting to one another's follies and senseless vanities. How many volumes have been written about angels, about immaculate conception, about original sin, when that all that is solid reason or clear revelation, in all these three articles may be reasonably enough comprised in forty lines? And in these trifles and impertinencies men are curiously busy, while they neglect those glorious precepts of Christianity and holy life, which are the glories of our religion, and would enable us to a happy eternity.

My lord, thus far my thoughts have carried me, and then I thought I had reason to go further, and to examine the proper grounds upon which these persuasions might rely and stand firm, in case any body should contest against them. For, possibly, men may be angry at me, and my design : for I do all them great displeasure, who think no end is then well served, when their interest is disserved; and but that I have written so untowardly and heavily, that I am not worth a consideration, possibly some or other might be writing against me. But then I must tell them, I am prepared for an answer beforehand : for I think I have spoken reason in my book, and examined it with all the severity I have; and if after all this I be deceived, this confirms me in my first opinion, and becomes a new argument to me that I have spoken reason; for it furnishes me with a new instance that it is necessary there should be a mutual compliance and toleration, because even then when a man thinks he hath most reason to be confident, he may easily be deceived.

For I am sure I have no other design but the prosecution and advantage of truth, and I may truly use the words of Gregory Nazianzen, "we are not studious of peace at the expense of sound doctrine, in order to obtain the reputation of kindness and good-nature : " but I have written this, because I thought it was necessary, and seasonable, and charitable, and agreeable to the great precepts and design of Christianity, consonant to the

practice of the apostles, and the best ages of the church, most agreeable to Scripture and reason, to revelation and the nature of the thing; and it is such a doctrine, that if there be variety in human affairs, if the event of things be not settled in a durable consistence, but is changeable, every one of us all may have need of it. I shall only, therefore, desire that they who will read it may come to the reading it, with as much simplicity of purposes and unmixed desires of truth, as I did to the writing it; and, that no man trouble himself with me or my discourse, that thinks beforehand that his opinion cannot be reasonably altered. If he thinks me to be mistaken before he tries, let him also think that he may be mistaken too,—and, that he who judges before he hears, is mistaken though he gives a right sentence, was good counsel. But at a venture, I shall leave this sentence of Solomon to his consideration, “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but a fool rageth, and is confident.”—‘To think that one knows every thing, and positively to affirm, is a trick of boys, and bold young fellows,’ says Aristotle; but they who either know themselves, or things, or persons, always add “perhaps,” or “it may be.” Peradventure yea, peradventure no, is very often the wisest determination of a question. For there are, as the apostle notes, “foolish and unlearned questions:” * and it were better to stop the current of such fopperies by silence, than, by disputing them, convey them to posterity. And many things there are of more profit, which yet are of no more certainty; and, therefore, boldness of assertion (except it be in matters of faith and clearest revelation) is an argument of the vanity of the man, never of the truth of the proposition: for, to such matters, the saying of Xenophanes, in Varro, is pertinent and applicable, “God only knows them, and we conjecture.”

And although I be as desirous to know what I should, and what I should not, as any of my brethren, the sons of Adam; yet I find that the more I search, the further I am from being satisfied, and make but few discoveries, save of my own ignorance; and, therefore, I am desirous to follow the example of a very wise personage, Julius Agricola, of whom Tacitus gave this testimony, “He preserved through life what is so difficult to attain—that temperate judgment which avoids extremes even in the searching for knowledge:” or, that I may take my precedent from within the pale of the church, it was the saying of St Austin, “In regard to the questions you have proposed to me, I should no doubt prefer knowledge to ignorance; but since I have found the former unattainable, I choose rather to confess cautious ignorance than to profess fallacious knowledge.” And these words do very much express my sense. But if there be any man so confident as Luther sometimes was, who said that he could expound all Scripture; or so vain as Eckius, who, in his Chrysoprasus, ventured upon the highest and most mysterious question of predestination, “that in it he might give scope to his youthful lusts;” such persons as these, or any that is furious in his opinion, will scorn me and my discourse; but I shall not be much moved at it, only I shall wish that I had as much knowledge as they think me to want, and they as much as they believe themselves to have. In the mean time, modesty were better for us both, and indeed for all men. For when men indeed are knowing, amongst other things they are able to separate certainties from uncertainties: if they be not knowing, it is pity that their ig-

* 2 Tim. ii.

norance should be triumphant, or discompose the public peace, or private confidence.

And now, my lord, that I have inscribed this book to your lordship, although it be a design of doing honour to myself, that I have marked it with so honoured and beloved a name, might possibly need as much excuse as it does pardon, but that your lordship knows your own; for out of your mines I have digged the mineral; only I have stamped it with my own image, as you may perceive by the deformities which are in it. But your great name in letters will add so much value to it, as to make it obtain its pardon amongst all them that know how to value you, and all your relatives and dependents, by the proportion of relation. For others I shall be incurious, because the number of them that honour you, is the same with them that honour learning and piety, and they are the best theatre, and the best judges; amongst which the world must needs take notice of my ambition to be ascribed, by my public pretence, to be what I am in all heartiness of devotion, and for all the reason of the world, my honoured lord, your lordship's most faithful, and most affectionate servant,

JER. TAYLOR.

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

HE that submits his understanding to all that he knows God hath said, and is ready to submit to all that he hath said, if he but know it, denying his own affections, and ends, and human persuasions, laying them all down at the foot of his great Master, Jesus Christ,—that man hath brought his understanding into subjection, and every proud thought unto the obedience of Christ, and this is ‘the obedience of faith.’

ON THE RASHNESS OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH IN IMPUTING THE CHARGE OF HERESY.

BESIDES the heresies noted in Scripture, the age of the apostles, and that which followed, were infested with other heresies; but such as had the same formality and malignity with the precedent, all of them, either such as taught practical impieties, or denied an article of the creed. Hegesippus, in Eusebius, reckons only seven prime heresies, that sought to deflower the purity of the church: that of Simon,—that of Thebutes,—of Cleobius,—of Dositheus,—of Gortheus,—of Masbotheus; I suppose Cerinthus to have been the seventh man, though he express him not: but of these, except the last, we know no particulars; but that Hegesippus says, they were false Christs, and that their doctrine was directly against God and his blessed Son. Menander also was the first of a sect, but he bewitched the people with his sorceries. Cerinthus's doctrine pretended enthusiasm, or a new revelation, and ended in lust and impious theorems, in matter of un-

cleanness. The Ebionites denied Christ to be the Son of God, and affirmed him to be a mere man, begot by natural generation, (by occasion of which, and the importunity of the Asian bishops, St John wrote his Gospel) and taught the observation of Moses' law. Basilides taught it lawful to renounce the faith, and take false oaths, in time of persecution. Carpocrates was a very bedlamite, half-witch, and quite madman; and practised lust, which he called the secret operations to overcome the potentates of the world. Some more there were, but of the same nature and pest, not of a nicety in dispute, not a question of secret philosophy, not of atoms, and undiscernible propositions, but open defiances of all faith, of all sobriety, and of all sanctity, except only the doctrine of the millenaries, which, in the best ages, was esteemed no heresy, but true catholic doctrine, though it since hath had justice done to it, and hath suffered a just condemnation.

Hitherto, and in these instances, the church did esteem and judge of heresies, in proportion to the rules and characters of faith. For faith being a doctrine of piety as well as truth, that which was destructive either of fundamental verity, or of Christian sanctity, was against faith, and if it made a sect, was heresy; if not, it ended in personal impiety, and went no further. But those, who, as St Paul says, 'not only did such things, but had pleasure in them that do them,' and, therefore, taught others to do what they impiously did dogmatize,—they were heretics, both in matter and form, in doctrine and deportment, towards God, and towards man, and judicable in both tribunals.

But the Scripture and apostolical sermons, having expressed most high indignation against these masters of impious sects, leaving them under prodigious characters and horrid representations, as calling them 'men of corrupt minds,—reprobates concerning the faith,—given over to strong delusions to the belief of a lie,—false apostles,—false prophets,—men already condemned, and that by themselves,—antichrists,—enemies to God;'—and heresy itself, 'a work of the flesh, excluding from the kingdom of heaven;' left such impression in the minds of all their successors, and so much zeal against such sects, that if any opinion commenced in the church, not heard of before, it oftentimes had this ill luck to run the same fortune with an old heresy. For because the heretics did bring in new opinions in matters of great concernment, every opinion, anew brought in, was liable to the same exception; and because the degree of malignity, in every error, was oftentimes undiscernible, and most commonly indemonstrable, their zeal was alike against all: and those ages, being full of piety, were fitted to be abused with an over active zeal, as wise persons and learned are, with a too much indifferency.

But it came to pass, that the further the succession went from the apostles, the more forward men were in numbering heresies, and that upon slighter and more uncertain grounds. Some footsteps of this we shall find, if we consider the sects that are said to have sprung in the first three hundred years, and they were pretty and quick in their springs and falls; four-score and seven of them are reckoned. They were indeed reckoned afterward; and though, when they were alive, they were not condemned with as much forwardness as after they were dead, yet, even then, confidence began to mingle with opinions less necessary,—and mistakes in judgment were oftener, and more public, than they should have been. But if they were forward in their censures (as sometimes some of them were), it is no

great wonder they were deceived. For what principle or criterion had they then to judge of heresies, or condemn them, besides the single dictates or decretals of private bishops? for Scripture was indifferently pretended by all; and concerning the meaning of it, was the question: now there was no general council all that while, no opportunity for the church to convene; and if we search the communicatory letters of the bishops and martyrs, in those days, we shall find but few sentences decretory, concerning any question of faith, or new sprung opinion. And in those that did, for aught appears, the persons were misreported, or their opinions mistaken, or at most, the sentence of condemnation was no more than this; such a bishop who hath had the good fortune, by posterity, to be reputed a catholic, did condemn such a man of such an opinion, and yet himself erred in as considerable matters; but meeting with better neighbours in his lifetime, and a more charitable posterity, hath his memory preserved in honour. It appears plain enough, in the case of Nicholas, the deacon of Antioch, upon a mistake of his words, whereby he taught 'to abuse the flesh,' viz., by acts of austerity and self-denial, and mortification; some wicked people that were glad to be mistaken and abused into a pleasing crime, pretended that he taught them to abuse the flesh by filthy commixtures and pollutions: This mistake was transmitted to posterity with a full cry, and acts afterwards found out, to justify an ill opinion of him. For by St Jerome's time it grew out of question, but that he was the vilest of men, and the worst of heretics; accusations that, while the good man lived were never thought of; for his daughters were virgins, and his sons lived in holy celibate all their lives, and himself lived in chaste wedlock; and yet his memory had rotted in perpetual infamy, had not God (in whose sight the memory of the saints is precious) preserved it, by the testimony of Clemens Alexandrinus, and, from him, of Eusebius and Nicephorus. But in the catalogue of heretics, made by Philastrius, he stands marked with a black character, as guilty of many heresies: by which one testimony we may guess what trust is to be given to those catalogues. Well, this good man had ill luck to fall into unskilful hands, at first; but Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Lactantius,—to name no more, had better fortune; for it being still extant in their writings that they were of the millenary opinion, Papias before, and Nepos after, were censured hardly, and the opinion put into the catalogue of heresies: and yet these men were never suspected as guilty, but like the children of the captivity, walked in the midst of the flame, and not so much as the smell of fire passed on them. But the uncertainty of these things is very memorable, in the story of Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, contesting with Eusebius Pamphilus: Eustathius accused Eusebius for going about to corrupt the Nicene Creed, 'of which slander he then acquitted himself,' saith Socrates; and yet he is not cleared by posterity, for still he is suspected, and his fame not clear: however Eusebius then escaped well, but to be quit with his adversary, he recriminates and accuses him to be 'a favourer of Sabellius, rather than of the Nicene canons;' an imperfect accusation, God knows, when the crime was a suspicion, provable only by actions capable of divers constructions, and at the most, made but some degrees of probability; and the fact itself did not consist 'in indivisibility,' and, therefore, was to stand or fall, to be improved or lessened, according to the will of the judges, whom in this cause, Eustathius, by his ill fortune and a potent adversary, found harsh towards him, insomuch that he was, for

heresy, deposed in the synod of Antioch; and though this was laid open in the eye of the world, as being most ready at hand, with the greatest ease charged upon every man, and with greatest difficulty acquitted by any man; yet there were other suspicions raised upon him privately, or, at least, talked of *ex post facto*, and pretended as causes of his deprivation, lest the sentence should seem too hard for the first offence. And yet, what they were, no man could tell, saith the story. But it is observable what Socrates saith, as an excuse for such proceedings, "It is the manner among the bishops, when they accuse them that are deposed, they call them wicked, but they publish not the actions of their impiety."—It might possibly be that the bishops did it in tenderness of their reputation, but yet hardly; for to punish a person publicly and highly, is a certain declaring the person punished guilty of a high crime, and then to conceal the fault, upon pretence to preserve his reputation, leaves every man at liberty to conjecture what he pleaseth; who possibly will believe it worse than it is, inasmuch as they think his judges so charitable as therefore to conceal the fault, lest the publishing of it should be his greatest punishment, and the scandal greater than his deprivation. However this course, if it were just in any, was unsafe in all; for it might undo more than it could preserve, and, therefore, is of more danger than it can be of charity. It is, therefore, too probable that the matter was not very fair; for, in public sentences, the acts ought to be public, but that they rather pretend heresy to bring their ends about, shows how easy it is to impute that crime, and how forward they were to do it: and that they might, and did then, as easily call heretic as afterward, when Vigilius was condemned of heresy, for saying there were antipodes; or as the friars of late did, who suspected Greek and Hebrew of heresy, and called their professors heretics, and had like to have put Terence and Demosthenes into the *Index Expurgatorius*; sure enough they railed at them *pro concione*, therefore because they understood them not, and had reason to believe they would accidentally be enemies to their reputation among the people.

By this instance, which was a while after the Nicene council, where the acts of the church were regular, judicial, and orderly, we may guess at the sentences passed upon heresy, at such times and in such cases, when their process was more private, and their acts more tumultuary, their information less certain, and, therefore, their mistakes more easy and frequent. And it is remarkable, in the case of the heresy of Montanus, the scene of whose heresy lay within the first three hundred years, though it was represented in the catalogues afterwards, and possibly the mistake concerning it is to be put upon the score of Epiphanius, by whom Montanus and his followers were put into the catalogue of heretics, for commanding abstinence from meats, as if they were unclean, and of themselves unlawful. Now the truth was, Montanus said no such thing; but commanded frequent abstinence, enjoined dry diet, and an ascetic table, not for conscience' sake, but for discipline; and yet because he did this with too much rigour and strictness of mandate, the primitive church disliked it in him, as being too near their error, who, by a judicial superstition, abstained from meats as from uncleanness. This, by the way, will much concern them who place too much sanctity in such rites and acts of discipline; for it is an eternal rule, and of never-failing truth, that such abstinences, if they be obtruded as acts of original immediate duty and sanctity, are unlawful and supersti-

tious; if they be for discipline, they may be good, but of no great profit: it is that "neglecting of the body" which, St Paul says, profited but little; and just in the same degree, the primitive church esteemed them; for they therefore reprehended Montanus, for urging such abstinences with too much earnestness, though but in the way of discipline; for that it was no more, Tertullian, who was himself a Montanist and knew best the opinions of his own sect, testifies; and yet Epiphanius, reporting the errors of Montanus, commends that which Montanus truly and really taught, and which the primitive church condemned in him; and, therefore, represents that heresy to another sense, and affixes that to Montanus, which Epiphanius believed a heresy, and yet, which Montanus did not teach. And this also, among many other things, lessens my opinion very much of the integrity or discretion of the old catalogues of heretics, and much abates my confidence towards them.

And now that I have mentioned them casually, in passing by, I shall give a short account of them; for men are much mistaken; some in their opinions concerning the truth of them, as believing them to be all true; some concerning their purpose, as thinking them sufficient, not only to condemn all those opinions, there called heretical, but to be a precedent to all ages of the church, to be free and forward in calling heretic. But he that considers the catalogues themselves, as they are collected by Epiphanius, Philastrius, and St Austin, shall find that many are reckoned for heretics, for opinions in matters disputable, and undetermined, and of no consequence; and in these catalogues of heretics there are men numbered for heretics, who, by every side respectively, are acquitted; so that there is no company of men in the world that admit these catalogues as good records, or sufficient sentences of condemnation. For the churches of the reformation, I am certain, they acquit Acrius, for denying prayer for the dead,—and the Eustathians, for denying invocation of saints. And I am partly of opinion, that the church of Rome is not willing to call the Collyridians heretics, for offering a cake to the Virgin Mary, unless she also will run the hazard of the same sentence, for offering candles to her: and that they will be glad, with St Austin, to excuse the Tertullianists, for picturing God in a visible corporeal representment. And yet these sects are put in the black book by Epiphanius, and St Austin, and Isidore respectively. I remember also, that the Osseni are called heretics, because they refused to worship towards the east; and yet, in that dissent, I find not the malignity of a heresy, nor any thing against an article of faith or good manners; and it being only in circumstance, it were hard, if they were otherwise pious men and true believers, to send them to hell for such a trifle. The Pareremeneutæ refused to follow other men's dictates like sheep, but would expound Scripture according to the best evidence themselves could find, and yet were called heretics, whether they expounded true or no. The Pauliciani, for being offended at crosses,—the Proclians, for saying, in a regenerate man all his sins were not quite dead, but only curbed and assuaged,—were called heretics, and so condemned, for ought I know, for affirming that which all pious men feel, in themselves, to be too true. And he that will consider how numerous the catalogues are, and to what a volume they are come in their last collections, to no less than five hundred and twenty (for so many heresies and heretics are reckoned by Prateolus), may think, that if a retrenchment were justly

made of truths, and all impertinences, and all opinions, either still disputable, or less considerable, the number would much decrease; and, therefore, that the catalogues are much amiss, and the name heretic is made a bugbear to affright people from their belief, or to discountenance the persons of men, and disrepute them, that their schools may be empty, and their disciples few.

So that I shall not need to instance how that some men were called heretics by Philastrius, for rejecting the translation of the Seventy, and following the bible of Aquila, wherein the great faults mentioned by Philastrius, are, that he translates *Χριστον Θεον*, not 'the Christ,' but 'the anointed of God,' and instead of 'Emanuel,' writes 'God with us.' Such another was the heresy of the Quartodecimani; for the Easterlings were all proclaimed heretics, for keeping Easter after the manner of the East; and as Socrates and Nicephorus report, the bishop of Rome was very forward to excommunicate all the bishops of the Lesser Asia, for observing the feast according to the tradition of their ancestors, though they did it modestly, quietly, and without faction; and although they pretended, and were as well able to prove their tradition from St John, of so observing it, as the Western church could prove the tradition derivative from St Peter and St Paul. If such things as these make up the catalogues of heretics (as we see they did), their accounts differ from the precedents they ought to have followed,—that is, the censures apostolical,—and, therefore, are unsafe precedents for us; and unless they took the liberty of using the word heresy, in a lower sense than the world now doth, since the councils have been forward in pronouncing anathema, and took it only for a distinct sense, and a differing persuasion in matters of opinion and minute articles, we cannot excuse the persons of the men: but if they intended the crime of heresy against those opinions, as they laid them down in their catalogues, that crime, I say, which is a work of the flesh, which excludes from the kingdom of heaven, all that I shall say against them, is, that the causeless curse shall return empty; and no man is damned the sooner, because his enemy cries 'thou cursed,' and they that were the judges and accusers, might err as well as the persons accused, and might need as charitable a construction of their opinions and practices as the other. And of this we are sure, they had no warrant from any rule of Scripture, or practice apostolical, for driving so furiously and hastily, in such decreetory sentences. But I am willing rather to believe their sense of the word 'heresy' was more gentle than with us it is; and for that they might have warrant from Scripture.

But by the way, I observe, that although these catalogues are a great instance to show, that they whose age and spirits were far distant from the apostles, had also other judgments concerning faith and heresy than the apostles had, and the ages apostolical; yet, these catalogues, although they are reports of heresies, in the second and third ages, are not to be put upon the account of those ages, nor to be reckoned as an instance of their judgment, which, although it was in some degrees more culpable than that of their predecessors, yet in respect of the following ages, it was innocent and modest. But these catalogues I speak of, were set down according to the sense of the then present ages, in which as they, in all probability, did differ from the apprehensions of the former centuries, so it is certain, there were differing leanings, other fancies, divers representments and judgments of men depending upon circumstances, which the first ages

knew, and the following ages did not; and, therefore, the catalogues were drawn with some truth, but less certainty, as appears in their differing about the authors of some heresies; several opinions imputed to the same, and some put in the roll of heretics by one, which the other left out; which, to me, is an argument, that the collectors were determined, not by the sense and sentence of the three first ages, but by themselves, and some circumstances about them, which to reckon for heretics, which not. And that they themselves were the prime judges, or perhaps some in their own age, together with them; but there was not any sufficient external judicatory competent to declare heresy, that, by any public or sufficient sentence or act of court, had furnished them with warrant for their catalogues. And, therefore, they are no argument sufficient, that the first ages of the church, which certainly were the best, did much recede from that which I showed to be the sense of the Scripture, and the practice of the apostles: they all contented themselves with the apostles' creed, as the rule of the faith; and, therefore, were not forward to judge of heresy but by analogy to their rule of faith. And these catalogues, made after these ages, are not sufficient arguments that they did otherwise; but rather of the weakness of some persons, or of the spirit and genius of the age in which the compilers lived; in which the device of calling all differing opinions by the name of heresies, might grow to be a design to serve ends, and to promote interests, as often as an act of zeal and just indignation against evil persons, destroyers of the faith, and corrupters of manners.

For, whatever private men's opinions were, yet, till the Nicene council, the rule of faith was entire in the apostles' creed; and provided they retained that, they easily broke not the unity of faith, however differing opinions might possibly commence in such things, in which a liberty were better suffered, than prohibited with a breach of charity. And this appears exactly in the question between St Cyprian of Carthage, and Stephen, bishop of Rome; in which one instance, it is easy to see what was lawful and safe for a wise and good man; and yet how others began, even then, to be abused by that temptation, which since hath invaded all Christendom. St Cyprian rebaptized heretics, and thought he was bound so to do; calls a synod in Africa, as being metropolitan, and confirms his opinion by the consent of his suffragans and brethren, but still with so much modesty, that if any man was of another opinion, he judged him not, but gave him that liberty that he desired himself. Stephen, bishop of Rome, grows angry, excommunicates the bishops of Asia and Africa, that in divers synods had consented to rebaptization,—and without peace, and without charity, condemns them for heretics. Indeed, here was the rarest mixture and conjunction of unlikelihoods that I have observed. Here was an error of opinion, with much modesty and sweetness of temper, on one side; and on the other, an over active and impetuous zeal to attest a truth. It uses not to be so; for error usually is supported with confidence, and truth suppressed and discountenanced by indifference. But that it might appear that the error was not the sin, but the uncharitableness, Stephen was accounted a zealous and furious person; and St Cyprian, though deceived, yet a very good man, and of great sanctity.

The sum is this: St Cyprian did right in a wrong cause, as it hath been since judged; and Stephen did ill in a good cause. As far then as piety and charity are to be preferred before a true opinion, so far is St Cyprian's prac-

tice a better precedent for us, and example of primitive sanctity, than the zeal and indiscretion of Stephen. St Cyprian had not learned to forbid to any one a liberty of prophesying or interpretation, if he transgressed not the foundation of faith, and the creed of the apostles.

THE MIXTURE OF SIMPLICITY AND OBSCURITY IN HOLY WRIT.

GOD, who disposes of all things sweetly, and according to the nature and capacity of things and persons, had made those only necessary, which he had taken care should be sufficiently propounded to all persons, of whom he required the explicit belief. And, therefore, all the articles of faith are clearly and plainly set down in Scripture; and the Gospel is not hid except to those which are lost.

But, besides these things, which are so plainly set down, ‘some for doctrine,’ as St Paul says, that is, for articles and foundation of faith; some for instruction, some for reproof, some for comfort, that is, in matters practical and speculative, of several tempers and constitutions;—there are innumerable places, containing in them great mysteries, but yet either so inwrapped with a cloud, or so darkened with umbrages, or heightened with expressions, or so covered with allegories and garments of rhetoric, so profound in the matter, or so altered or made intricate in the manner, in the clothing, and in the dressing, that God may seem to have left them as trials of our industry, and arguments of our imperfections, and incentives to the longings after heaven, and the clearest revelations of eternity, and as occasions and opportunities of our mutual charity and toleration to each other, and humility in ourselves, rather than the repositories of faith, and furniture of creeds, and articles of belief.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF COUNCILS TO DETERMINE CONTROVERSIES.

BUT since we are all this while in uncertainty, it is necessary that we should address ourselves somewhere, where we may rest the sole of our foot: and nature, Scripture, and experience, teach the world, in matters of question, to submit to some final sentence. For it is not reason that controversies should continue, till the erring person shall be willing to condemn himself; and the Spirit of God hath directed us by that great question at Jerusalem, to address ourselves to the church, that in a plenary council and assembly, she may synodically determine controversies. So that if a general council have determined a question, or expounded Scripture, we may no more disbelieve the decree, than the Spirit of God himself who speaks in them. And indeed, if all assemblies of bishops were like that first, and all bishops were of the same spirit of which the apostles were, I should obey their decree with the same religion as I do them whose preface was, ‘it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,’ and I doubt not but our bles-

sed Saviour intended that the assemblies of the church should be judges of the controversies, and guides of our persuasions in matters of difficulty. But he also intended they should proceed according to his will which he had revealed, and those precedents which he had made authentic by the immediate assistance of his Holy Spirit: he hath done his part, but we do not do ours. And if any private person in the simplicity and purity of his soul desires to find out a truth of which he is in search and inquisition, if he prays for wisdom, we have a promise he shall be heard and answered liberally; and therefore much more, when the representatives of the catholic church do meet; because every person there hath for himself a title to the promise, and another title as he is a governor and a guide of souls and all of them together have another title in their united capacity, especially, if in that union they pray, and proceed with simplicity and purity; so that there is no disputing against the pretence, and promises, and authority, of general councils. For if any one man can hope to be guided by God's Spirit in the search, the pious, and impartial, and unprejudicate search of truth, then much more may a general council. If no private man can hope for it, then truth is not necessary to be found, nor are we obliged to search for it, or else we are saved by chance: but if private men can, by virtue of a promise upon certain conditions, be assured of finding out sufficient truth, much more shall a general council. So that I consider thus: there are many promises pretended to belong to general assemblies in the church; but I know not any ground, nor any pretence, that they shall be absolutely assisted, without any condition on their own parts, and whether they will or no: faith is a virtue as well as charity, and therefore consists in liberty and choice, and hath nothing in it of necessity: there is no question but that they are obliged to proceed according to some rule; for they expect no assistance by way of enthusiasm; if they should, I know no warrant for that, neither did any general council ever offer a decree which they did not think sufficiently proved by Scripture, reason, or tradition, as appears in the acts of the councils; now then, if they be tied to conditions, it is their duty to observe them; but whether it be certain that they will observe them, that they will do all their duty, that they will not sin even in this particular in the neglect of their duty, that is the consideration. So that if any man questions the title and authority of general councils, and whether or no great promises appertain to them, I suppose him to be much mistaken; but he also that thinks all of them have proceeded according to rule and reason, and that none of them were deceived, because possibly, they might have been truly directed,—is a stranger to the history of the church, and to the perpetual instances and the experiments of the faults and failings of humanity. It is a famous saying of St Gregory, that he had the four first councils in esteem and veneration next to the four evangelists; I suppose it was because he did believe them to have proceeded according to rule, and to have judged righteous judgment; but why had he not the same opinion of other councils too, which were celebrated before his death (for he lived after the fifth general)? not because they had not the same authority; for that which is warrant for one, is warrant for all; but because he was not so confident that they did their duty, nor proceeded so without interest as the first four had done, and the following councils did never get that reputation which all the catholic church acknowledged due to the first four. And in the next order were the three following generals;

for the Greeks and Latins did never jointly acknowledge but seven generals to have been authentic in any sense, because they were in no sense agreed that any more than seven had proceeded regularly, and done their duty: so that now the question is not whether general councils have a promise that the Holy Ghost will assist them: for every private man hath that promise, that if he does his duty, he shall be assisted sufficiently in order to that end to which he needs assistance; and therefore much more shall general councils, in order to that end for which they convene, and to which they need assistance; that is, in order to the conservation of the faith, for the doctrinal rules of good life, and all that concerns the essential duty of a Christian, but not in deciding questions to satisfy contentious, or curious, or presumptuous spirits. But now can the bishops so convened be factious, —can they be abused with prejudice, or transported with interests,—can they resist the Holy Ghost,—can they extinguish the Spirit,—can they stop their ears, and serve themselves upon the Holy Spirit and the pretence of his assistances; and cease to serve them upon themselves, by captivating their understandings to his dictates, and their wills to his precepts? Is it necessary they should perform any condition? Is there any one duty for them to perform in these assemblies, a duty which they have power to do or not to do? If so, then they may fail of it, and not do their duty: and if the assistance of the Holy Spirit be conditional, then we have no more assurance that they are assisted, than that they do their duty, and do not sin.

Now let us suppose what this duty is: certainly, ‘if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;’ and all that come to the knowledge of the truth, must come to it by such means, which are spiritual and holy dispositions, in order to a holy and spiritual end. They must be ‘shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, that is, they must have peaceable and docile dispositions, nothing with them that is violent and resolute to encounter those gentle and sweet assistances: and the rule they are to follow, is the rule which the Holy Spirit hath consigned to the catholic church, that is, the Holy Scripture, either entirely, or at least for the greater part of the rule: so that now if the bishops be factious and prepossessed with persuasions depending upon interest, it is certain they may judge amiss; and if they recede from the rule, it is certain they do judge amiss: and this I say upon their grounds who most advance the authority of general councils. Now then put the case a council should recede from Scripture; whether or no were we bound to believe its decrees? I only ask the question: for it were hard to be bound to believe what to our understanding seems contrary to that which we know to be the word of God: but if we may lawfully recede from the council’s decrees, in case they be contrariant to Scripture, it is all that I require in this question. For if they be tied to a rule, then they are to be examined and understood according to the rule, and then we are to give ourselves that liberty of judgment which is requisite to distinguish us from beasts, and to put us into a capacity of reasonable people, following reasonable guides. But however, if it be certain that the councils are to follow Scripture, then if it be notorious that they do recede from Scripture, we are sure we must obey God rather than men, and then we are well enough. For, unless we are bound to shut our eyes, and not to look upon the sun, if we may give ourselves liberty to believe what seems most plain, and unless the authority of a council be so great a prejudice as to make us to do violence to our understanding, so as not to disbelieve

the decree, because it seems contrary to Scripture, but to believe it agrees with Scripture, though we know not how, not therefore because the council hath decreed it,—unless, I say, we be bound in duty to be so obediently blind and sottish, we are sure that there are some councils which are pretended general, that have retired from the public notorious words and sense of Scripture. For what wit of man can reconcile the decree of the thirteenth session of the council of Constance with Scripture, in which session the half communion was decreed, in defiance of Scripture, and with a notwithstanding to Christ's institution. For in the preface of the decree, Christ's institution and the practice of the primitive church are expressed, and then, with a notwithstanding, communion in one kind is established. Is it possible for any man to contrive a way to make the decree of the council of Trent, commanding the public offices of the church to be in Latin, friends with the fourteenth chapter of the Corinthians? It is not amiss to observe how the hyperaspists of that council sweat to answer the allegations of St Paul; and the wisest of them do it so extremely poor, that it proclaims to all the world that the strongest man that is, cannot eat iron, or swallow a rock. Now then, would it not be an unspeakable tyranny to all wise persons (who as much hate to have their souls enslaved as their bodies imprisoned), to command them to believe, that these decrees are agreeable to the word of God? Upon whose understanding soever these are imposed, they may at the next session reconcile them to a crime, and make any sin sacred, or persuade him to believe propositions contradictory to a mathematical demonstration. All the arguments in the world, that can be brought to prove the infallibility of councils, cannot make it so certain that they are infallible, as these two instances do prove infallibly that these were deceived; and if ever we may safely make use of our reason, and consider whether councils have erred or no, we cannot by any reason be more assured, that they have or have not, than we have in these particulars: so that, either our reason is of no manner of use, in the discussion of this question and the thing itself is not at all to be disputed, or if it be, we are certain that these actually were deceived, and we must never hope for a clearer evidence in any dispute. And if these be, others might have been, if they did as these did, that is, depart from their rule. The experience of it is notorious, that councils have erred: and all the arguments against experience are but plain sophistry.

I end this discourse with representing the words of Gregory Nazianzen in his epistle to Procopius: "For my own part, if I must tell the truth, my disposition is to avoid all councils of bishops whatsoever, since I never have seen any one council which terminated in a good and desirable result, or which did not contribute more to the increase than to the mitigation of threatening mischiefs." But I will not be so severe and dogmatical against them: for I believe many councils to have been called with sufficient authority, to have been managed with singular piety and prudence, and to have been finished with admirable success and truth. And where we find such councils, he that will not with all veneration believe their decrees, and receive their sanctions, understands not that great duty he owes to them who have the care of our souls, whose "faith we are bound to follow," saith St Paul; that is, so long as they follow Christ: and certainly many councils have done so. But this was then when the public interest of Christendom was better conserved in determining a true article, than in finding a discreet temper or a wise expedient to satisfy disagreeing persons. It was in ages

when the sum of religion did not consist in maintaining the *grandezza* of the papacy; where there was no order of men with a fourth vow upon them to advance St Peter's chair: when there was no man, nor any company of men, that esteemed themselves infallible: and therefore they searched for truth, as if they meant to find it, and would believe it if they could see it proved, not resolved to prove it because they had upon chance or interest believed it; then they had rather have spoken a truth, than upheld the reputation but only in order to truth. This was done sometimes, and when it was done, God's Spirit never failed them, but gave them such assistances as were sufficient to that good end for which they were assembled, and did implore his aid. And therefore it is that the four general councils, so called by way of eminency, have gained so great a reputation above all others; not because they had a better promise, or more special assistances, but because they proceeded better according to the rule, with less faction, without ambition and temporal ends.

And yet those very assemblies of bishops had no authority by their decrees to make a divine faith, or to constitute new objects of necessary credence; they made nothing true that was not so before, and therefore they are to be apprehended in the nature of excellent guides, and whose decrees are most certainly to determine all those, who have no argument to the contrary of greater force and efficacy than the authority or reasons of the council. And there is a duty owing to every parish priest, and to every diocesan bishop; these are appointed over us, and to answer for our souls, and are therefore morally to guide us, as reasonable creatures are to be guided, that is, by reason and discourse: for in things of judgment and understanding, they are but in form next above beasts that are to be ruled by the imperiousness and absoluteness of authority, unless the authority be divine, that is, infallible. Now then, in a juster height, but still in its true proportion, assemblies of bishops are to guide us with a higher authority, because, in reason, it is supposed they will do it better, with more argument and certainty, and with decrees, which have the advantage by being the results of many discourses of very wise and good men. But besides that they are excellent instruments of peace, the best human judicatories in the world, rare sermons for determining a point in controversy, and the greatest probability from human authority; besides these advantages, I say, I know nothing greater than general councils can pretend to with reason and argument sufficient to satisfy any wise man. And as there was never any council so general, but it might have been more general, for, in respect of the whole church, even Nice itself was but a small assembly; so there is no decree so well constituted, but it may be proved by an argument higher than the authority of the council: and therefore general councils, and national, and provincial, and diocesan, in their several degrees, are excellent guides for the prophets, and directions and instructions for the prophesying; but not of weight and authority to restrain their liberty so wholly, but that they may dissent, when they see a reason strong enough so to persuade them, as to be willing, upon the confidence of that reason and their own sincerity, to answer to God for such their modesty, and peaceable, but, as they believe, their necessary, disagreeing.

AGAINST RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

ALTHOUGH every man may be deceived, yet some are right, and may know it too; for every man that may err, does not therefore certainly err; and if he errs because he recedes from his rule, then if he follows it he may do right; and if ever any man upon just grounds did change his opinion, then he was in the right and was sure of it too: and although confidence is mistaken for a just persuasion many times, yet some men are confident, and have reason to be. Now when this happens, the question is, what deportment they are to use towards persons that disagree from them, and by consequence are in error.

First, then, no Christian is to be put to death, dismembered, or otherwise directly persecuted, for his opinion, which does not teach impiety or blasphemy. If it plainly and apparently brings in a crime, and himself does act it or encourage it, then the matter of fact is punishable according to its proportion of malignity. As if he preaches treason or sedition, his opinion is not his excuse, because it brings a crime: and a man is never the less traitor, because he believes it lawful to commit treason: and a man is a murderer, if he kills his brother unjustly, although he thinks he does God good service in it. Matters of fact are equally judicable, whether the principle of them be from within or from without. And if a man could pretend to innocence in being seditious, blasphemous, or perjured, by persuading himself it is lawful, there were as great a gate opened to all iniquity as will entertain all the pretences, the designs, the impostures, and disguises, of the world. And therefore God hath taken order, that all rules concerning matters of fact and good life shall be so clearly explicated, that without the crime of the man he cannot be ignorant of all his practical duty. And therefore the apostles and primitive doctors made no scruple of condemning such persons for heretics, that did dogmatize a sin. He that teaches others to sin, is worse than he that commits the crime, whether he be tempted by his own interest, or encouraged by the other's doctrine. It was as bad in Basilides to teach it to be lawful to renounce faith and religion, and take all manner of oaths and covenants in time of persecution, as if himself had done so. Nay, it is as much worse as the mischief is more universal, or as a fountain is greater than a drop of water taken from it. He that writes treason in a book, or preaches sedition in a pulpit, and persuades it to the people, is the greatest traitor and incendiary, and his opinion there is the fountain of a sin; and therefore could not be entertained in his understanding upon weakness, or inculpable or innocent prejudice; he cannot, from Scripture or divine revelation, have any pretence to colour that so fairly as to seduce either a wise or an honest man. If it rest there and go no farther, it is not cognoscible, and so escapes that way; but, if it be published, then it becomes matter of fact in principle and in persuasion, and is just so punishable as is the crime that it persuades. Such were they of whom St Paul complains, who brought in "damnable doctrines and lusts." St Paul's "I would they were cut off," is just of them, take it in any sense of rigour and severity, so it be proportionable to the crime or criminal doctrine. But no matter of mere opinion, no errors that of themselves are not sins, are to be persecuted or punished by death or corporal inflictions. This is now to be proved.

Secondly: all the former discourse is sufficient argument, how easy it is for us in such matters to be deceived. So long as Christian religion was a simple profession of the articles of belief, and a hearty persecution of the rules of good life, the fewness of the articles and the clearness of the rule was cause of the seldom prevarication. But when divinity is swelled up to so great a body, when the several questions which the peevishness and wantonness of sixteen ages have commenced, are concentrated into one, and from all these questions something is drawn into the body of theology, till it hath ascended up to the greatness of a mountain, and the sum of divinity collected by Aquinas makes a volume as great as was that of Livy, mocked at in the epigram, "The whole of which a library can scarcely hold;" it is impossible for any industry to consider so many particulars in the infinite numbers of questions as are necessary to be considered, before we can, with certainty, determine any. And after all the considerations, which we can have in a whole age, we are not sure 'not to be deceived.' The obscurity of some questions, the nicety of some articles, the intricacy of some revelations, the variety of human understandings, the windings of logic, the tricks of adversaries, the subtilty of sophisters, the engagement of educations; personal affections, the portentous number of writers, the infinity of authorities, the vastness of some arguments, as consisting in enumeration of many particulars, the uncertainty of others, the several degrees of probability, the difficulties of Scripture, the invalidity of probation of tradition, the opposition of all exterior arguments to each other, and their open contestation, the public violence done to authors and records, the private arts and supplantings, the falsifyings, the indefatigable industry of some men to abuse all understandings and all persuasions into their own opinions, these and thousands more, even all the difficulty of things, and all the weaknesses of man, and all the arts of the devil, have made it impossible for any man, in so great variety of matter, not to be deceived. No man pretends to it but the pope, and no man is more deceived than he is in that very particular.

Thirdly: from hence proceeds a danger which is consequent to this proceeding: for if we, who are so apt to be deceived, and so insecure in our resolution of questions disputable, should persecute a disagreeing person, we are not sure we do not fight against God. For if his proposition be true and persecuted, then, because all truth derives from God, this proceeding is against God, and therefore this is not to be done, upon Gamaliel's ground, 'lest peradventure we be found to fight against God;' of which, because we can have no security (at least) in this case, we have all the guilt of a doubtful or an uncertain conscience. For if there be no security in the thing, as I have largely proved, the conscience in such cases is as uncertain as the question is: and if it be not doubtful where it is uncertain, it is because the man is not wise, but as confident as ignorant; the first without reason, and the second without excuse. And it is very disproportionable for a man to persecute another certainly for a proposition, that, if he were wise, he would know it is not certain; at least the other person may innocently be uncertain of it. If he be killed, he is certainly killed; but if he be called heretic, it is not so certain that he is a heretic. It were good therefore that proceedings were according to evidence, and the rivers not swelled over the banks, nor a certain definitive sentence of death passed upon such persuasions, which cannot certainly be defined. And this argument is of so much the more force, because we see that the greatest persecutions that ever have

been, were against truth, even against Christianity itself; and it was a prediction of our blessed Saviour, that persecution should be the lot of true believers. And if we compute the experience of suffering Christendom, and the prediction that truth should suffer, with those few instances of suffering heretics, it is odds but persecution is on the wrong side, and that it is error and heresy that are cruel and tyrannical; especially since the truth of Jesus Christ and of his religion is so meek, so charitable, and so merciful. And we may in this case exactly use the words of St Paul, "But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now;" and so ever will it be till Christ's second coming.

Fourthly: whoever persecutes a disagreeing person, arms all the world against himself, and all pious people of his own persuasion, when the scales of authority return to his adversary, and attest his contradictory; and then what can he urge for mercy for himself or his party, that sheweth none to others. If he says that he is to be spared because he believes true, but the other was justly persecuted because he was in error, he is ridiculous. For he is confidently believed to be a heretic, as he believes his adversary such; and 'whether he be or no' being the thing in question, of this he is not to be his own judge; but he that hath authority on his side, will be sure to judge against him. So that, what either side can indifferently make use of, it is good that neither would, because neither side can with reason sufficiently do it in prejudice of the other. If a man will say, that every man must take his adventure, and if it happens authority is with him, he will persecute his adversaries, and if it turns against him, he will bear it as well as he can, and hope for a reward of martyrdom and innocent suffering;—besides that this is so equal to be said of all sides, and besides, that this is a way to make an eternal disunion of hearts and charities, and that it will make Christendom nothing but a shambles and a perpetual butchery; and as fast as men's wits grow wanton, or confident, or proud, or abused, so often there will be new executions or massacres; besides all this, it is most unreasonable and unjust, as being contrariant to those laws of justice and charity, whereby we are bound with greater zeal to spare and preserve an innocent than to condemn a guilty person, and there is less malice and iniquity in sparing the guilty than in condemning the good: because it is in the power of men to remit a guilty person to divine judicature, and for divers causes not to use severity; but in no case it is lawful, neither hath God at all given to man a power, to condemn such persons as cannot be proved other than pious and innocent. And therefore it is better, if it should so happen, that we should spare the innocent person, and one that is actually deceived, than that, upon the turn of the wheel, the true believers should be destroyed.

And this very reason, he that had authority sufficient and absolute to make laws, was pleased to urge, as a reasonable inducement for the establishing of that law which he made for the indemnity of erring persons. It was in the parable of the tares mingled with the good seed. The good seed (Christ himself being the interpreter) are the children of the kingdom, the tares are the children of the wicked one: upon this comes the precept, "Gather not the tares by themselves, but let them both grow together till the harvest," that is, till the day of judgment. This parable hath been tortured infinitely to make it confess its meaning, but we shall soon despatch it. All the difficulty and variety of exposition are reducible to these two

questions, What is meant by ‘Gather not,’ and what by ‘Tares?’ that is, what kind of sword is forbidden, and what kind of persons is to be tolerated. The former is clear; for the spiritual sword is not forbidden to be used to any sort of criminals, for that would destroy the power of excommunication. The prohibition therefore lies against the use of the temporal sword, in cutting off some persons. Who they are, is the next difficulty. But by ‘tares,’ or the ‘children of the wicked one,’ are meant either persons of ill lives, wicked persons only in matters practical; or else another kind of evil persons, men criminal or faulty in matters intellectual. One or other of these two must be meant; a third I know not. But the former cannot be meant, because it would destroy all bodies politic, which cannot consist without laws, nor laws without a compulsory and a power of the sword: therefore if criminals were to be let alone till the day of judgment, bodies politic must stand or fall at the will of the wicked, and nothing good could be protected, not innocence itself, nothing secured but violence and tyranny. It follows then, that since a kind of persons which are indeed faulty, are to be tolerated, it must be meant of persons faulty in another kind, in which the Gospel had not, in other places, clearly established a power externally compulsory: and therefore since in all actions practically criminal a power of the sword is permitted, here, where it is denied, must be meant a crime of another kind, and by consequence errors intellectual, commonly called heresy.

And after all this, the reason there given confirms this interpretation; for therefore it is forbidden to cut off these tares, “lest we also pull up the wheat with them:” which is the sum of these two last arguments. For, because heresy is of so nice consideration and difficult sentence, in thinking to root up heresies we may by our mistakes destroy true doctrine: which although it be possible to be done in all cases of practical question by mistake, yet because external actions are more discernible than inward speculations and opinions, innocent persons are not so easily mistaken for the guilty in actions criminal, as in matters of inward persuasion. And upon that very reason St Martin was zealous to have procured a revocation of a commission granted to certain tribunes to make inquiry in Spain for sects and opinions; for, under colour of rooting out the Priscillianists, there was much mischief done, and more likely to happen, to the orthodox. For it happened then, as oftentimes since, men were considered heretics, rather from their complexion and their dress, than from their creed. They were no good inquisitors of heretical pravity, so Sulpitius witnesses. But, secondly, the reason says, that therefore these persons are so to be permitted as not to be persecuted, lest when a revolution of human affairs sets contrary opinions in the throne or chair, they who were persecuted before, should now themselves become persecutors of others; and so, at one time or other, before or after, the wheat be rooted up, and the truth be persecuted. But, as these reasons confirm the law and this sense of it; so, abstracting from the law, it is of itself concluding by an argument ‘*ab incommodo*,’ and that founded upon the principles of justice and right reason, as I formerly alleged.

Fifthly: we are not only uncertain of finding out truths in matters disputable, but we are certain that the best and ablest doctors of Christendom have been actually deceived in matters of great concernment; which thing is evident in all those instances of persons from whose doctrine all sorts of Christians respectively take liberty to dissent. The errors of Papias,

Irenæus, Lactantius, Justin Martyr in the millenary opinion, of St Cyprian, Firnilian, the Asian and African fathers in the question of re-baptization, St Austin in his decretory and uncharitable sentence against the unbaptized children of Christian parents, the Roman or the Greek doctors in the question of the procession of the Holy Ghost, and in the matter of images, are examples beyond exception. Now if these great personages had been persecuted or destroyed for their opinions, who should have answered the invaluable loss the Church of God should have sustained in missing so excellent, so exemplary, and so great lights? But then if these persons erred, and by consequence light have been destroyed, what should have become of others whose understanding was lower and their security less, their errors more, and their danger greater? At this rate all men should have passed through the fire: for who can escape, when St Cyprian and St Austin cannot? Now to say these persons were not to be persecuted, because although they had errors, yet none condemned by the church at that time or before, is to say nothing to the purpose, and nothing that is true. Not true; because St Cyprian's error was condemned by Pope Stephen, which, in the present sense of the prevailing party in the church of Rome, is to be condemned by the church. Not to the purpose; because it is nothing else but to say, that the church did tolerate their errors. For since those opinions were open and manifest to the world, that the church did not condemn them, it was either because those opinions were by the church not thought to be errors; or, if they were, yet she thought fit to tolerate the error and the erring person. And if she would do so still, it would in most cases be better than now it is. And yet if the church had condemned them, it had not altered the case as to this question; for either the persons upon the condemnation of their error should have been persecuted, or not. If not, why shall they now, against the instance and precedent of those ages who were confessedly wise and pious, and whose practices are often made to us arguments to follow? If yea, and that they had been persecuted, it is a thing which this argument condemns, and the loss of the church had been invaluable in the losing or the provocation and temptation of such rare personages; and the example and the rule of so ill consequence, that all persons might upon the same ground have suffered; and though some had escaped, yet no man could have any more security from punishment than from error.

Sixthly: either the disagreeing person is in error, or not, but a true believer: in either of the cases to persecute him is extremely imprudent. For if he be a true believer, then it is a clear case that we do open violence to God, and his servants, and his truth. If he be in error, what greater folly and stupidity than to give to error the glory of martyrdom, and the advantages which are accidentally consequent to a persecution? For as it was true of the martyrs, as often as we die, so often we are born, and the increase of their trouble was the increase of their confidence and the establishment of their persuasions; so it is in all false opinions; for that an opinion is true or false, is extrinsical or accidental to the consequents and advantages it gets by being afflicted. And there is a popular pity that follows all persons in misery, and that compassion breeds likeness of affections, and that very often produces likeness of persuasion; and so much the rather, because there arises a jealousy and pregnant suspicion that they who persecute an opinion, are destitute of sufficient arguments to confute it, and

that the hangman is the best disputant. For if those arguments which they have for their own doctrine, were a sufficient ground of confidence and persuasion, men would be more willing to use those means and arguments, which are better compliances with human understanding, which more naturally do satisfy it, which are more humane and Christian, than that way is which satisfies none, which destroys many, which provokes more, and which makes all men jealous. To which add, that those who die for their opinion, leave in all men great arguments of the heartiness of their belief, of the confidence of their persuasion, of the piety and innocence of their persons, of the purity of their intention and simplicity of purposes, that they are persons totally disinterested and separate from design. For no interest can be so great as to be put in balance against a man's life and his soul; and he does very imprudently serve his ends who, seemingly and foreknowingly, loses his life in the prosecution of them. Just as if Titius should offer to die for Sempronius upon condition he might receive twenty talents, when he had done his work. It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great sincerity, and a great hope, when a man lays down his life in attestation of a proposition. "Greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life," saith our blessed Saviour. And although laying of a wager is an argument of confidence more than truth; yet laying such a wager, staking of a man's soul, and pawning his life, give a hearty testimony that the person is honest, confident, resigned, charitable, and noble. And I know not whether truth can do a person or a cause more advantages than these can do to an error. And therefore, besides the impiety, there is great imprudence in canonizing a heretic, and consecrating an error by such means, which were better preserved as encouragements of truth and comforts to real and true martyrs. And it is not amiss to observe, that this very advantage was given by heretics, who were ready to shew and boast their catalogues of martyrs: in particular the Circumcellions did so, and the Donatists; and yet the first were heretics, the second schismatics. And it was remarkable in the scholars of Priscillian, who as they held their master in the reputation of a saint while he was living, so when he was dead, they held him in veneration as a martyr; they with reverence and devotion carried his and the bodies of his slain companions to an honourable sepulture, and counted it religion to swear by the name of Priscillian. So that the extinguishing of the person gives life and credit to his doctrine, and when he is dead, he yet speaks more effectually.

Seventhly: it is unnatural and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions. Unnatural; for understanding, being a thing wholly spiritual, cannot be restrained, and therefore neither punished by corporal afflictions. It is a matter of another world. You may as well cure the colic by brushing a man's clothes, or fill a man's belly with a syllogism. These things do not communicate in matter, and therefore neither in action nor passion. And since all punishments in a prudent government punish the offender to prevent a future crime, and so it proves more medicinal than vindictive, the punitive act being in order to the cure and prevention; and since no punishment of the body can cure a disease in the soul; it is disproportionate in nature, and in all civil government, to punish where the punishment can do no good. It may be an act of tyranny, but never of justice. For is an opinion ever the more true or false for being persecuted? Some men have believed it the more, as being provoked into a confidence, and

vexed into a resolution; but the thing itself is not the truer: and though the hangman may confute a man with an inexplicable dilemma, yet not convince his understanding; for such premises can infer no conclusion but that of a man's life: and a wolf may as well give laws to the understanding, as he whose dictates are only propounded in violence, and writ in blood: and a dog is as capable of a law as a man, if there be no choice in his obedience, nor discourse in his choice, nor reason to satisfy his discourse. And as it is unnatural, so it is unreasonable, that Sempronius should force Caius to be of his opinion, because Sempronius is consul this year and commands the lictors. As if he that can kill a man, cannot but be infallible: and if he be not, why should I do violence to my conscience, because he can do violence to my person?

Eighthly: force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will, or be satisfied in his reason that his opinion is false, because discountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he lists, he might cure many inconveniences of his life: all his fears and his sorrows would soon disband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is persuaded that such an accident that afflicts him is an evil, and such an object formidable: let him but believe himself impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundered, disgraced, imprisoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his steps need to be disturbed, nor his quietness discomposed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him a hypocrite, but never to be a right believer; and so, instead of erecting a trophy to God and true religion, we build a monument for the devil. Infinite examples are recorded in church story to this very purpose. But Socrates instances in one for all: for when Eleusius bishop of Cyzicum was threatened by the emperor Valens with banishment and confiscation, if he did not subscribe to the decree of Ariminum,—at last he yielded to the Arian opinion, and presently fell into great torment of conscience, openly at Cyzicum recanted the error, asked God and the church forgiveness, and complained of the emperor's injustice: and that was all the good the Arian party got by offering violence to his conscience. And so many families in Spain, which are (as they call them) new Christians, and of a suspected faith, into which they were forced by the tyranny of the inquisition, and yet are secret Moors, are evidence enough of the inconvenience of preaching a doctrine by the point of the sword. For it either punishes a man for keeping a good conscience, or forces him into a bad; it either punishes sincerity, or persuades hypocrisy; it persecutes a truth, or drives into error: and it teaches a man to dissemble and to be safe, but never to be honest.

Ninthly: it is one of the glories of Christian religion, that it was so pious, excellent, miraculous, and persuasive, that it came in upon its own piety and wisdom, with no other force but a torrent of arguments and demonstration of the Spirit; a mighty rushing wind to beat down all strong holds and every high thought and imagination; but towards the persons of men it was always full of meekness and charity, compliance and toleration condescension and bearing with one another, “restoring persons overtaken with an error, in the spirit of meekness, considering lest we also be tempted.” The consideration is as prudent, and the proposition as just, as the precept is charitable. and the precedent was pious and holy. Now things are best

conserved with that which gives it the first being, and which is agreeable to its temper and constitution. That precept which it chiefly preaches in order to all the blessedness in the world, that is, of meekness, mercy, and charity, should also preserve itself and promote its own interest. For indeed nothing will do it so well, nothing doth so excellently insinuate itself into the understandings and affections of men, as when the actions and persuasions of a sect, and every part and principle and promotion, are univocal. And it would be a mighty disparagement to so glorious an institution, that in its principle it should be merciful and humane, and in the promotion and propagation of it so inhuman : and it would be improbable and unreasonable that the sword should be used in the persuasion of one proposition, and yet in the persuasion of the whole religion nothing like it. To do so may serve the end of a temporal prince, but never promote the honour of Christ's kingdom; it may secure a design of Spain, but will very much disserve Christendom, to offer to support it by that which good men believe to be a distinctive cognizance of the Mahometan religion from the excellency and piety of Christianity, whose sense and spirit are described in those excellent words of St Paul; "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth."* They that oppose themselves, must not be stricken by any of God's servants; and if yet any man will smite these who are his opposites in opinion, he will get nothing by that : he must quit the title of being 'servant of God,' for his pains. And I think, a distinction of persons secular and ecclesiastical will do no advantage for an escape, because even the secular power, if it be Christian, and a servant of God, must not be a striker. The servant of the Lord must not fight. I mean, in those cases where meekness of instruction is the remedy; or if the case be irremediable, abscission by censures is the penalty.

Tenthly : and if yet in the nature of the thing it were neither unjust nor unreasonable, yet there is nothing, under God Almighty, that hath power over the soul of man, so as to command a persuasion, or to judge a disagreeing. Human positive laws direct all external acts in order to several ends, and the judges take cognizance accordingly ; but no man can command the will, or punish him that obeys the law against his will : for because its end is served in external obedience, it neither looks after more, neither can it be served by more, nor take notice of any more. And yet possibly the understanding is less subject to human power than the will : for that human power hath a command over external acts, which naturally and regularly flow from the will, and in general suppose a direct act of the will, but always either a direct or indirect volition, primary or accidental; but the understanding is a natural faculty subject to no command, but where the command is itself a reason fit to satisfy and persuade it. And therefore God, commanding us to believe such revelations, persuades and satisfies the understanding by his commanding and revealing : for there is no greater probation in the world, that a proposition is true, than because God hath commanded us to believe it. But because no man's command is a satisfaction to the understanding, or a verification of the proposition, therefore the understanding is not subject to human authority. They may persuade,

* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

but not enjoin where God hath not ; and where God hath, if it appears so to him, he is an infidel if he does not believe it. And if all men have no other efficacy or authority on the understanding but by persuasion, proposal and entreaty, then a man is bound to assent but according to the operation of the argument, and the energy of persuasion; neither indeed can he, though he would never so faintly: and he that out of fear, and too much compliance, and desire to be safe, shall desire to bring his understanding with some luxation to the belief of human dictates and authorities, may as often miss of the truth as hit it, but is sure always to lose the comfort of truth, because he believes it upon indirect, insufficient, and incompetent arguments: and as his desire it should be so, is his best argument that it is so, so the pleasing of men is his best reward, and his not being condemned and contradicted, all the possession of a truth.

THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TOWARDS PERSONS DISAGREEING, AND WHEN PERSECUTION FIRST CAME IN.

AND thus this truth hath been practised in all times of Christian religion, when there were no collateral designs on foot, nor interests to be served, nor passions to be satisfied. In St Paul's time, though the censure of heresy were not so loose and forward as afterward, and all that were called heretics, were clearly such and highly criminal, yet as their crime was, so was their censure, that is, spiritual. They were first admonished, once at least, for so Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome, read that place of Titus iii. But since that time all men, and at that time some read it, "after a first and second admonition," reject a heretic: "Rejection from the communion of saints after two warnings," that is the penalty. St John expresses it by not 'eating with them,' not 'bidding them God-speed;' but the persons against whom he decrees so severely, are such as denied Christ to be come in the flesh, direct antichrists. And let the sentence be as high as it lists in this case, all that I observe is, that since in so damnable doctrines nothing but spiritual censure, separation from the communion of the faithful was enjoined and prescribed, we cannot pretend to an apostolical precedent, if in matters of dispute and innocent question, and of great uncertainty and no malignity, we shall proceed to sentence of death.

Well, however zealous the apostles were against heretics, yet none were by them, or their dictates, put to death. The death of Ananias and Sapphira, and the blindness of Elymas the sorcerer, amount not to this, for they were miraculous inflictions: and the first was a punishment to vow-breach and sacrilege, the second of sorcery and open contestation against the religion of Jesus Christ; neither of them concerned the case of this present question. Or if the case were the same, yet the authority is not the same: for he that inflicted these punishments, was infallible, and of a power competent; but no man at this day is so. But as yet people were converted by miracles, and preaching, and disputing, and heretics by the same means were redargued, and all men instructed, none tortured for their opinion. And this continued till Christian people were vexed by disagreeing persons, and were impatient and peevish by their own too-much

confidence, and the luxuriancy of a prosperous fortune: but then they would not endure persons that did dogmatize any thing, which might intrench upon their reputation or their interest. And it is observable that no man nor no age did ever teach the lawfulness of putting heretics to death, till they grew wanton with prosperity. But when the reputation of the governors was concerned, when the interests of men were endangered, when they had something to lose, when they had built their estimation upon the credit of disputable questions, when they began to be jealous of other men, when they overvalued themselves and their own opinions, when some persons invaded bishoprics upon pretence of new opinions; when they, as they thrive in the favour of emperors, and in the success of their disputes, solicited the temporal power to banish, to fine, to imprison, and to kill, their adversaries.

So that the case stands thus: In the best times, amongst the best men, when there were fewer temporal ends to be served, when religion and the pure and simple designs of Christianity only were to be promoted, in those times and amongst such men no persecution was actual nor persuaded, nor allowed, towards disagreeing persons. But as men had ends of their own and not of Christ, as they receded from their duty, and religion from its purity, as Christianity began to be compounded with interests and blended with temporal designs, so men were persecuted for their opinions. This is most apparent, if we consider when persecution first came in, and if we observe how it was checked by the holiest and the wisest persons.

The first great instance I shall note, was in Priscillian and his followers, who were condemned to death by the tyrant Maximus. Which instance, although St Jerome observes as a punishment and judgment for the crime of heresy, yet is of no use in the present question, because Maximus put some Christians of all sorts to death promiscuously, catholic and heretic, without choice; and therefore the Priscillianists might as well have called it a judgment upon the catholics, as the catholics upon them.

But when Ursatus and Stacius, two bishops, procured the Priscillianists' death by the power they had at court, St Martin was so angry at them for their cruelty, that he excommunicated them both. And St Ambrose upon the same stock denied his communion to the Itaciani. And the account that Sulpicius gives of the story is this; "thus by a most detestable precedent these men, unworthy of life, were put to death." The example was worse than the men. If the men were heretical, the execution of them however was unchristian.

But it was of more authority that the Nicene fathers supplicated the Emperor, and prevailed for the banishment of Arius. Of this we can give no other account, but that, by the history of the time, we see baseness enough and personal misdemeanour and factiousness of spirit in Arius to have deserved worse than banishment, though the obliquity of his opinion were not put into the balance; which we have reason to believe was not so much as considered, because Constantine gave toleration to differing opinions, and Arius himself was restored upon such conditions to his country and office, which would not stand with the ends of the Catholics, if they had been severe exactors of concurrence and union of persuasions.

I am still within the scene of ecclesiastical persons, and am considering what the opinion of the learnedest and holiest prelates was concerning this great question. If we will believe St Austin (who was a credible person),

no good man did allow it. This was St Austin's final opinion : for he had first been of the mind, that it was not honest to do any violence to mispersuaded persons; and when upon an accident happening in Hippo he had altered and retracted that part of the opinion, yet then also he excepted death, and would by no means have any mere opinion made capital. But, for aught that appears, St Austin had greater reason to have retracted that retraction than his first opinion : for his saying "that no good man approves it," was as true as the thing was reasonable it should be so. Witness those known testimonies of Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, St Jerome, Severus Sulpicius, Minutius, Hilary, Damascenus, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Bernard; and divers others.

Against this concurrent testimony my reading can furnish me with no adversary, nor contrary instances, but in Atticus of Constantinople, Theodosius of Synada, in Stacius and Ursatus before reckoned. Only indeed some of the later Popes of Rome began to be busy and unmerciful : but it was then when themselves were secure, and their interests great, and their temporal concerns highly considerable.

For it is most true, and not amiss to observe it, that no man who was under the ferula, did ever think it lawful to have opinions forced, or heretics put to death; and yet many men, who themselves have escaped the danger of a pile and a fagot, have changed their opinion just as the case was altered, that is, as themselves were unconcerned in the suffering. Petilian, Parmenian, and Gaudentius, by no means would allow it lawful, for themselves were in danger, and were upon that side that is ill thought of and discountenanced : but Gregory and Leo, Popes of Rome, upon whose side the authority and advantages were, thought it lawful they should be punished and persecuted, for themselves were unconcerned in the danger of suffering. And therefore St Gregory commends the Exarch of Ravenna for forcing them who dissented from those men who called themselves the church. And there were some divines in the lower Germany, who upon great reasons spake against the tyranny of the inquisition, and restraining prophesying, who yet, when they had shaken off the Spanish yoke, began to persecute their brethren. It was unjust in them,—in all men—unreasonable, and uncharitable, and often increases the error, but never lessens the danger.

But yet although the church, I mean in her distinct and clerical capacity, was against destroying or punishing difference in opinion, till the Popes of Rome did superseminate and persuade the contrary; yet the bishops did persuade the emperors to make laws against heretics, and to punish disobedient persons with fines, with imprisonment, with death and banishment respectively. This indeed calls us to a new account. For the churchmen might not proceed to blood nor corporal inflictions, but might they not deliver over to the secular arm and persuade temporal princes to do it? For this I am to say, that since it is notorious that the doctrine of the clergy was against punishing heretics, the laws which were made by the emperors against them, might be for restraint of differing religion in order to the preservation of the public peace, which is too frequently violated by the division of opinions. But I am not certain whether that was always the reason, or whether or no some bishops of the court did not also serve their own ends in giving their princes such untoward counsel; but we find the laws made severally to several purposes, in divers cases and with different severity.

But whatever whispers some politics might make to their princes, as the wisest and holiest did not think it lawful for churchmen alone to do executions, so neither did they transmit such persons to the secular judicature. And therefore when the edict of Macedonius the president was so ambiguous, that it seemed to threaten death to heretics, unless they recanted, St Austin admonished him carefully to provide, that no heretic should be put to death, alleging it not only to be unchristian, but illegal also, and not warranted by imperial constitutions; for before his time no laws were made for their being put to death: but however he prevailed that Macedonius published another edict, more explicit, and less seemingly severe.

But afterward, many got a trick of giving them over to the secular power; which at the best is no better than hypocrisy, removing envy from themselves, and laying it upon others; a refusing to do that in external act which they do in counsel and approbation; which is a transmitting the act to another, and retaining a proportion of guilt unto themselves, even their own and the others too. I end this with the saying of Chrysostom, "It is right to refute and to condemn impious and heretical opinions; but in regard to the heretics themselves, we are to spare their persons, and pray for their salvation."

WHETHER IT BE LAWFUL FOR A PRINCE TO GIVE TOLERATION TO SEVERAL RELIGIONS.

FOR upon these very grounds we may easily give account of that great question, whether it be lawful for a prince to give toleration to several religions. For, first, it is a great fault that men will call the several sects of Christians by the names of several religions. The religion of Jesus Christ is, 'the form of sound doctrine and wholesome words,' which is set down in Scripture indefinitely, actually conveyed to us by plain places, and separated as for the question of necessary or not necessary by the symbol of the apostles. Those impertinences, which the wantonness and vanity of men hath commenced, which their interests have promoted, which serve not truth so much as their own ends, are far from being distinct religions; for matters of opinion are no parts of the worship of God, nor in order to it, but as they promote obedience to his commandments; and when they contribute towards it, are, in that proportion as they contribute, parts, and actions, and minute particulars, of that religion, to whose end they do or pretend to serve. And such are all the sects and all the pretences of Christians, but pieces and minutes of Christianity, if they do serve the great end; as every man for his own sect and interest believes for his share that it does.

Toleration hath a double sense or purpose. For sometimes by it men understand a public license and exercise of a sect: sometimes it is only an indemnity of the persons privately to convene and to opine, as they see cause, and as they mean to answer to God. Both these are very much to the same purpose, unless some persons, whom we are bound to satisfy, be scandalized, and then the prince is bound to do as he is bound to satisfy.

To God it is all one : for, abstracting from the offence of persons, which is to be considered just as our obligation is to content the persons, it is all one whether we indulge them to meet publicly or privately, to do actions of religion concerning which we are not persuaded that they are truly holy. To God it is just one to be in the dark and in the light, the thing is the same, only the circumstance of the public and private is different : which cannot be concerned in any thing, nor can it concern any thing, but the matter of scandal and relation to the minds and fantasies of certain persons.

So that to tolerate is not to persecute. And the question, whether the prince may tolerate divers persuasions, is no more than whether he may lawfully persecute any man for not being of his opinion. Now in this case he is just so to tolerate diversity of persuasions as he is to tolerate public actions : for no opinion is judicable, nor no person punishable, but for a sin ; and if his opinion, by reason of its managing or its effect, be in itself or become a sin to the person, then as he is to do towards other sins, so to that opinion or man so opening. But to believe so, or not so, when there is no more but mere believing, is not in his power to enjoin, therefore not to punish. And it is not only lawful to tolerate disagreeing persuasions, but the authority of God only is competent to take notice of it, and infallible to determine it, and fit to judge ; and therefore no human authority is sufficient to do all those things, which can justify the inflicting temporal punishments upon such as do not conform in their persuasions to a rule or authority, which is not only fallible, but supposed by the disagreeing person to be actually deceived.

But I consider, that, in the toleration of a different opinion, religion is not properly and immediately concerned, so as in any degree to be endangered. For it may be safe in diversity of persuasions, and it is also a part of Christian religion, that the liberty of men's consciences should be preserved in all things, where God hath not set a limit and made a restraint ; that the soul of man should be free, and acknowledge no master but Jesus Christ ; that matters spiritual should not be restrained by punishments corporal ; that the same meekness and charity should be preserved in the promotion of Christianity, that gave it foundation and increment and firmness in its first publication ; that conclusions should not be more dogmatical than the virtual resolution and efficacy of the premises ; and that the persons should not more certainly be condemned than their opinions confuted ; and lastly, that the infirmities of men and difficulties of things should be both put into balance, to make abatement in the definitive sentence against men's persons. But then, because toleration of opinions is not properly a question of religion, it may be a question of policy : and although a man may be a good Christian, though he believe an error not fundamental, and not directly or evidently impious, yet his opinion may accidentally disturb the public peace, through the over-activeness of the persons, and the confidence of their belief, and the opinion of its appendant necessity ; and therefore toleration of differing persuasions in these cases, is to be considered upon political grounds, and is just so to be admitted or denied as the opinions or toleration of them may consist with the public and necessary ends of government. Only this ; as Christian princes must look to the interest of their government, so especially must they consider the interests of Christianity, and not call every redargution or modest discovery of an established error, by the name of disturbance of the peace. For it is very likely that

the peevishness and impatience of contradiction in the governors may break the peace. Let them remember but the gentleness of Christianity, the liberty of consciences which ought to be preserved, and let them do justice to the persons, whoever they are, that are peevish, provided no man's person be overborne with prejudice. For if it be necessary for all men to subscribe to the present established religion, by the same reason at another time a man may be bound to subscribe to the contradictory, and so to all religions in the world. And they only who by their too-much confidence entitle God to all their fancies, and make them to be questions of religion, and evidences for heaven, or consignations to hell, they only think this doctrine unreasonable, and they are the men that first disturb the church's peace, and then think there is no appeasing the tumult but by getting the victory. But they that consider the things wisely, understand, that since salvation and damnation depend not upon impertinences, and yet that public peace and tranquillity may,—the prince is, in this case, to seek how to secure government, and the issues and intentions of that, while there is in these cases directly no insecurity to religion, unless by the accidental uncharitableness of them that dispute: which uncharitableness is also much prevented when the public peace is secured, and no person is on either side engaged upon revenge, or troubled with disgrace, or vexed with punishments by any decretory sentence against him. It was the saying of a wise statesman, I mean Thuanus, that "heretics who in time of peace are divided into factions, are united against the public by persecution." If you persecute heretics or discrepant, they unite themselves as to a common defence: if you permit them, they divide themselves upon private interests; and the rather, if this interest was an ingredient of the opinion.

The sum is this: it concerns the duty of a prince, because it concerns the honour of God, that all vices and every part of ill life be discountenanced and restrained; and therefore in relation to that, opinions are to be dealt with. For the understanding being to direct the will, and opinions to guide our practices, they are considerable only as they teach impiety and vice, as they either dishonour God or disobey him. Now all such doctrines are to be condemned; but for the persons preaching such doctrines, if they neither justify nor approve the pretended consequences, which are certainly impious, they are to be separated from that consideration. But if they know such consequences and allow them, or if they do not stay till the doctrines produce impiety, but take sin before hand, and manage them impiously in any sense, or if either themselves or their doctrine do really, and without colour or feigned pretext, disturb the public peace and just interests, they are not to be suffered. In all other cases it is not only lawful to permit them, but it is also necessary that princes and all in authority should not persecute discrepant opinions. And in such cases wherein persons not otherwise incompetent are bound to reprove an error (as they are in many), in all these if the prince makes restraint, he hinders men from doing their duty, and from obeying the laws of Jesus Christ.

OF INTERCOMMUNICATING WITH CHURCHES OF DIFFERENT
PERSUASIONS.

As for the duty of particular men in the question of communicating with churches of different persuasions, it is to be regulated according to the laws of those churches. For if they require no impiety or any thing unlawful as the condition of their communion, then they communicate with them as they are servants of Christ, as disciples of his doctrine and subjects to his laws, and the particular distinguishing doctrine of their sect hath no influence or communication with him, who from another sect is willing to communicate with all the servants of their common Lord. For since no church of one name is infallible, a wise man may have either the misfortune or a reason to believe of every one in particular, that she errs in some article or other, either he cannot communicate with any, or else he may communicate with all that do not make a sin, or the profession of any error, to be the condition of their communion. And therefore, as every particular church is bound to tolerate disagreeing persons in the senses and for the reasons above explicated; so every particular person is bound to tolerate her, that is, not to refuse her communion, when he may have it upon innocent conditions. For what is it to me if the Greek church denies procession of the third person from the second, so she will give me the right hand of fellowship (though I affirm it), therefore, because I profess the religion of Jesus Christ, and retain all matters of faith and necessity? But this thing will scarce be reduced to practice; for few churches that have framed bodies of confession and articles, will endure any person that is not of the same confession: which is a plain demonstration, that such bodies of confession and articles do much hurt, by becoming instruments of separating and dividing communions, and making unnecessary or uncertain propositions a certain means of schism and disunion. But then men would do well to consider whether or no such proceedings do not derive the guilt of schism upon them who least think it; and whether of the two is the schismatic; he that makes unnecessary and (supposing the state of things) inconvenient impositions, or he that disobeys them, because he cannot, without doing violence to his conscience, believe them; he that parts communion because without sin he could not entertain it, or they that have not made it necessary for him to separate by requiring such conditions, which to no man are simply necessary, and to his particular are either sinful or impossible.

The sum of all is this: there is no security in any thing or to any person but in the pious and hearty endeavours of a good life, and neither sin nor error does impede it from producing its proportionate and intended effect; because it is a direct delectory to sin and excuse to errors, by making them innocent, and therefore harmless. And, indeed, this is the intentment and design of faith. For (that we may join both ends of this discourse together) therefore certain articles are prescribed to us, and propounded to our understanding, that so we might be supplied with instructions, with motives and engagements to incline and determine our wills to the obedience of Christ. So that obedience is just so consequent to faith, as the acts of will are to the dictates of the understanding. Faith, therefore, being in order to obedience, and so far excellent as itself is a part of obedience, or the promoter of it, or an engagement to it; it is evident, that if obedience and a good life be secured upon the most reasonable and proper grounds of Christianity, that is, upon the Apostles' Creed, then faith also is secured.

Since whatsoever is beside the duties, the order of a good life cannot be a part of faith, because upon faith a good life is built : all other articles, by not being necessary, are no otherwise to be required but as they are to be obtained and found out, that is, morally, and fallibly, and humanly. It is fit all truths be promoted fairly and properly, and yet but few articles prescribed magisterially, nor framed into symbols and bodies of confession; least of all, after such composures, should men proceed so furiously as to say, all disagreeing after such declarations to be damnable for the future, and capital for the present. But this very thing is reason enough to make men more limited in their prescriptions, because it is more charitable in such suppositions so to do.

But in the thing itself, because few kinds of errors are damnable, it is reasonable, as few should be capital. And because every thing that is damnable in itself, and before God's judgment-seat is not discernible before men (and questions disputable are of this condition), it is also very reasonable that fewer be capital than what are damnable, and that such questions should be permitted to men to believe, because they must be left to God to judge. It concerns all persons to see that they do the best to find out truth; and if they do, it is certain that, let the error be ever so damnable, they shall escape the error, or the misery, of being damned for it. And if God will not be angry at men for being invincibly deceived, why should men be angry one at another? For he that is most displeased at another man's error, may also be tempted in his own will, and as much deceived in his understanding : for, if he may fail in what he may choose, he may also fail in what he cannot choose : his understanding is no more secured than his will, nor his faith more than his obedience. It is his own fault if he offends God in either : but whatsoever is not to be avoided, as errors, which are incident oftentimes even to the best and most inquisitive of men, are not offences against God, and therefore not to be punished or restrained by men : but all such opinions, in which the public interests of the commonwealth, and the foundation of faith and a good life, are not concerned, are to be permitted freely. "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind," was the doctrine of St Paul; and that is argument and conclusion too. I end with a story which I find in the Jews' books. "When Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travail, coming towards him who was a hundred years of age : he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down : but, observing that the old man eat and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other god. At which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was : he replied, 'I thrust him away because he did not worship thee.' God answered him, 'I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured me; and couldst not thou endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?' Upon this," saith the story, "Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction." Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

THE NATURE OF CUMULATIVE PROOF ILLUSTRATED BY THE EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

EVERY probable argument hath in it something of persuasion and proof, and although it cannot produce evidence and entire conviction to a wise and a discerning spirit, yet it can effect all that it ought; and although, if the will list, or if passions rule, the understanding shall be made stubborn against it, and reject it easily; yet if nothing be put in bar against it, it may bring a man to adhere to it beyond the evidence. But in some cases there are a whole army of little people, heaps of probable inducements which the understanding amasses together, and from every side gathers all that can give light and motion to the article in question; it draws auxiliaries from every thing, fights with every weapon, and by all means pursues the victory; it joins line to line, and precept to precept, reason to reason, and reason to authority; the sayings of wise men with the proverbs of the people; consent of talkers, and the arguings of disputers; the nature of the thing, and the reasonableness of its expectations; the capacities and possibilities of men, and of accidents; the purposes and designs, the usefulness and rewards; and by what all agents are and ought to be moved; customs are mingled with laws, and decencies with consideration of profit; the understanding considers the present state and heap of circumstances, and by prudence weighs every thing in its own balance; it considers the consequent of the opinion it intends to establish, and well weighs the inconvenience of the contrary. But from the obscurity and insufficiency of these particulars, there cannot come a perfect light; if a little black be mingled with white, the product must have something of every influence that can be communicated from its principle, or material constitution; and ten thousand millions of uncertain cannot make one certain.

In this case, the understanding comes not to any certainty by the energy of the motives and direct arguments of probability, or by the first effort and impresses of their strength; but by a particular reflection which it makes upon the heap, and by a secondary discoursing extracted from the whole; as being therefore convinced, because it believes it to be impossible, that so many considerations, that no way conspire either in matter or design, should agree in the production of a lie. It is not likely that so many beams of light should issue from the chambers of heaven for no other reason but to lead us into a precipice. Probable arguments and prudential motives are the great hinges of human actions; for as a pope once said, "It is but a little wit that governs the world;" and the uncertainty of arguments is the great cause of contingency in events; but as uncertain as most counsels are, yet all the great transactions of the affairs of the world are resolved on and acted by them; by suspicions, and fears, and probable apprehensions, infinite evils are prevented; and it is not, therefore, likely to be an error by which so perpetually so many good things are procured and effected. For it were a disparagement to the wise providence of God, and a lessening the rare economy of the Divine government, that he should permit almost all the world, and all reglements, the varieties of event, and all the changes of kingdoms, and all councils and deliberations, to be conducted by moral demonstrations, and to be under the power of probabilities, and yet, that these should be deceitful and false. Neither is it to be imagined, that God should permit wise men

and good,—men that on purpose place their reason in indifference, that abate of their heats, and quench their own extravagant fires,—men that wipe away all clouds and mists from their eyes, that they may see clearly,—men that search as they ought to do, for things that they are bound to find, things that they are commanded to search, and upon which even all their interests depend, and yet, requiring after the end whither they are directed, and by what means it is to be required, that these men should be inevitably abused by their own reason, by the best reason they have; and that when concerning the thing which cannot be demonstrated by proper and physical arguments, yet we are to enter into a persuasion so great, that for the verification of it men must venture their lives and their souls;—I say, if this kind of proof be not sufficient to effect all this, and sufficiently to assure such men, and competently to affirm and strengthen such resolutions, salvation and damnation must be by chance, or, which is worse, it must be impossible to be well, but when it cannot choose to be otherwise: and this, I say, is not to be imagined that God will or does permit, since all these intercourses so much concern God's glory and our eternal interest. The main events of heaven and hell do, in some regards, depend, as to us, upon our faith, whose objects are represented with such lights from God and right reason, as are sufficient to persuade, not to demonstrate; they are such which leave something to us of choice and love;—and every proposition of Scripture, though it be as sure, yet it is not so evident as the principles of geometry; and the Spirit of God effects his purposes with an influence as soft and placid as the warmth of the sun,—while a physical demonstration blows hard and high as the north wind; indeed a man must use rudeness, if he does not quit his garment at so loud a call, but we are more willing to part with it, when the sun gently requires us: so is a moral demonstration, it is so human, so persuasive, so complying with the nature and infirmities of man, with the actions of his life and his manner of operation, that it seems to have been created on purpose for the needs and uses of man in this life, for virtue and for hopes, for faith and for charity, to make us to believe by love, and to love by believing; for in heaven they that see and love, cannot choose but love, and see, and comprehend; for it is a reward, and fills all their faculties, and is not possessed by us, but itself possesses us. In this world where we are to do something ourselves, though all by the grace of God,—that which we do of ourselves is nothing else but to work as we ourselves can,—which indeed happens to be in propositions, as it is in the love of God; this cannot fail us, but we may fail of it: and so are the sentences of religion, infallible in themselves, but we may be deceived, while by a fallible way we proceed to infallible notices, for nothing else could endear our labour and our love, our search and our obedience; and therefore, this must be sufficient and acceptable, if we do what we can: but then this also will secure our confidence; and in the noises of Christendom, when disputing fellows say their brother is damned for not believing them, we need not to regard any such noises, if we proceed prudently as we can, and honestly as we ought; probable motives of our understanding are our sufficient conduct, and then we have this warrant: “Brethren, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we peace towards God.” And God would never have inspired his church with prudence, or made any such virtue, if the things which were put under the conduct of it, that is, probabilities, were not instrumental to the service of God, and to the verification of all its just and proper productions.

Probable arguments are like little stars, every one of which will be useless as to our conduct and enlightening; but when they are tied together by order and vicinity, by the finger of God and the hand of an angel, they make a constellation, and are not only powerful in their influence, but like a bright angel, to guide and to enlighten our way. And although the light is not great as the light of the sun or moon, yet mariners sail by their conduct: and though with trepidation and some danger, yet very regularly they enter into the haven. This heap of probable inducements is not of power as a mathematical and physical demonstration, which is in discourse as the sun is in heaven, but it makes a milky and a white path, visible enough to walk securely.

And next to these tapers of effective reason, drawn from the nature and from the events, and the accidents and the expectations and experiences of things, stands the grandeur of a long and united authority; the understanding thus reasoning, That it is not credible that this thing should have escaped the wiser heads of all the great personages in the world, who stood at the chairs of princes, or sat in the ruler's chair, and should only appear to two or three bold, illiterate, or vicious persons, ruled by lusts, and overruled by evil habits; but in this we have the same security and the same confidence that timorous persons have in the dark; they are pleased, and can see what is and what is not, if there be a candle,—but in the dark, they are less fearful, if they be in company.

This way of arguing some are pleased to call a moral demonstration: not that it can make a proposition clear and bright, and quit from clouds and obscurity, as a natural demonstration can; for I may in this case use Aristotle's saying, "Things of this nature may be very true, but are not very evident;" but it can produce the same effect, that is, it can lead into truth, not with as much brightness, but with as much certainty and infallibility in the event of things. For a man may as prosperously and certainly arrive at his journey's end, though but conducted by him that went the way but once before him, as if he had a straight path walled in on both sides; so may we find truth as certainly by probabilities, as by demonstrations: we are not so sure that we find it, but it is oftentimes as surely found. And if the heap arrive at that which we call a moral demonstration, it is as certain that no moral demonstration can be opposed against it, as that no natural demonstration can be brought in contradiction to a natural. For the understanding cannot call any thing a moral demonstration, till, by considering the particulars on both sides, the reasonableness of one, and the unreasonableness of the other, with a cold scent, and liberty of spirit, and an unbiassed will, it hath passed the sentence for the truth; and since, in this case, all the opposition is between strength and power on one side, and weakness and pretence on the other, it is impossible that the opposite parts should be demonstrations or seem so to the same man. And this appears by this also, that some propositions which are only proved by a conjugation of probable inducements, have yet obtained as certain and as regular events as a natural demonstration, and are believed equally, constantly, and perpetually by all wise men, and the understanding does regularly receive the same impression, and give the same assent, and forever draws forth the same conclusions,—when it is not abused with differing prejudices and pre-occupations, when its liberty and powers are not enfeebled with customs, example and contrary breeding, while it is not bribed by interest, or hurried away by passion.

Of this I shall choose to give one instance, which as it is of the greatest concernment in the world in itself, so the gay impieties and bold wits of the world, who are witty against none more than God and God's wisdom, have made it now to be but too seasonable, and that is, that 'the religion of Jesus Christ,' or 'the Christian religion, is from God;' concerning which I will not now pretend to bring in all the particulars whereby each part of it can be verified, but by heaping together such heads of probabilities which are, or may be, the cause of an infinite persuasion; and this I had rather choose to do for these reasons.

1. Because many men excellently learned have already discoursed largely of the truth of Christianity, and approved by a direct and close congression with other religions, by examination of the contrary pretences, refutation of their arguments, answering their objections, and have by direct force so far prevailed, that all the reason of the world appears to stand on the Christian side: and for me to do it now, as there is no just occasion ministered by this argument, so neither can it be useful and necessary.

2. In that way of arguing, every man that is an adversary can answer one argument, and some can reprove many; and none can prevail singly to possess all the understanding, and to fill all the corners of consideration, but in a moral demonstration that can be supplied

3. In the other way an adversary supposes himself to prevail, when he can answer the arguments singly: and the discourses in that method are like the servants sent singly to gather fruits of the husbandmen, they killed them as fast as they came, and a man may kill a whole kingdom over, if the opponents come by single persons; but a moral demonstration is like an army which can lose single persons, and yet prevail, but yet cannot be beaten, unless it be beaten all.

4. The few little things that atheistical persons prate against the holy Jesus and his most excellent religion, are infinitely outweighed by the multitude and variety of things to be said for it; and let the others stand (as if they meet with persons that cannot answer them), yet they are sure this greater ought to prevail, because it possesses all the corners of reason, and meets with every instance, and complies with the manner of a man, and is fitted to the nature of things, and complies with the will, and persuades the understanding, and is a guard against the tricks of sophisters, and does not only effect its purpose by direct influence, but is secured by reflection upon itself, and does more by its indirect strength, and by a back blow, than by its first operations; and, therefore,

This instance and this way of argument may be of more use to those persons who cannot so dispute, but that they are apt to be abused by little things, by talkings and imperfect arguings; it may be a defensive against trifling objections, and the impious pratings of the 'witty fools,' while the men are armed by love and prudence, and wise securities to stand with confidence and piety against talkings and intrigues of danger; for by this way best, "Wisdom is justified of all her children."

An instance of moral Demonstration, or a conjugation of Probabilities, proving that the Religion of Jesus Christ is from God.

THIS discourse, of all the disputables in the world, shall require the fewest things to be granted; even nothing but what was evident, even nothing but the very subject of the question, viz. That there was such a man

as Jesus Christ, that he pretended such things and taught such doctrines : for he that will prove these things to be from God, must be allowed that they were from something or other. But this postulate I do not ask for need, but for order's sake and art; for what the histories of that age reported as a public affair, as one of the most eminent transactions of the world, that which made so much noise, which caused so many changes, which occasioned so many wars, which divided so many hearts, which altered so many families, which procured so many deaths, which obtained so many laws in favour, and suffered so many rescripts in the disfavour of itself; that which was not done in a corner, but was thirty-three years and more in acting; which caused so many sects, and was opposed by so much art and so much power, that it might not grow; which filled the world with noise; which effected such great changes in the bodies of men, by curing the diseased, and smiting the contumacious or the hypocrites; which drew so many eyes, and filled so many tongues, and employed so many pens, and was the care and the question of the whole world at that time, and immediately after; that which was consigned by public acts and records of courts, which was in the books of friends and enemies; which came accompanied and remarked with eclipses, and stars, and prodigies of heaven and earth, that which the Jews, even in spite, and against their wills, confessed, and which the witty adversaries intending to overthrow, could never so much as challenge of want of truth in the matter of fact and story; that which they who are infinitely concerned that it should not be believed,—or more, that it had never been,—do yet only labour to make to appear not to have been divine: certainly, this thing is so certain that it was, that the defenders of it need not account it a kindness to have it presupposed; for never was any story in the world that had so many degrees of credibility, as the story of the person, life, and death of Jesus Christ : and if he had not been a true prophet, yet that he was in the world, and said and did such things cannot be denied; for, even concerning Mahomet, we make no question but he was in the world, and led a great part of mankind after him, and what was less proved we infinitely believe; and what all men say, and no man denies, and was notorious in itself, of this we may make further inquiries whether it was all that which it pretended : for that it did make pretences, and was in the world, needs no more probation.

But now, whether Jesus Christ was sent from God, and delivered the will of God, we are to take accounts from all the things of the world which were on him, or about him, or from him. Consider, first, his person: he was foretold by all the prophets: he, I say, for that appears by the event, and the correspondencies of their sayings to his person: he was described by infallible characterisms which did fit him, and did never fit any but him; for when he was born, then was the fulness of time, and the Messiah was expected at the time when Jesus did appear, which gave occasion to many of the godly then to wait for him, and to hope to live till the time of his revelation: and they did so; and with a spirit of prophecy which their own nation did confess and honour, glorified God at the revelation: and the most excellent and devout persons that were conspicuous for their piety, did then rejoice in him, and confess him; and the expectation of him, at that time, was so public and famous, that it gave occasion to divers impostors to abuse the credulity of the people in pretending to be the Messiah. But not only the predictions of the time, and the perfect synchronisms did point him out, but at his birth

a strange star appeared, which guided certain Levantine princes and sages to the inquiry after him; a strange star which had an irregular place, and an irregular motion, that came by design, and acted by counsel, the counsel of the Almighty Guide; it moved from place to place, till it stood just over the house where the babe did sleep; a star of which the heathen knew much, who knew nothing of him; a star which Chalcidius affirmed to have signified the descent of God for the salvation of man; a star that guided the wise Chaldees to worship him with gifts, as the same disciple of Plato does affirm, and as the holy Scriptures deliver. And this star could be no secret: it troubled all the country; it put Herod upon strange arts of security for his kingdom; it effected a sad tragedy accidentally, for it occasioned the death of all the little babes in the city and voisinage of Bethlehem. But the birth of this young child, which was thus glorified by a star, was also signified by an angel, and was effected by the holy Spirit of God, in a manner which was in itself supernatural; a Virgin was his mother, and God was his father, and his beginning was miraculous; and this matter of his birth of a virgin was proved to an interested and jealous person, even to Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus; it was affirmed publicly by all his family, and by all his disciples, and published in the midst of all his enemies, who by no artifice could reprove it, a matter so famous, that when it was urged as an argument to prove Jesus to be the Messias, by the force of a prophecy in Isaiah,—“A virgin shall conceive a Son,”—they who obstinately refused to admit him, did not deny the matter of fact, but denied that it was so meant by the prophet; which, if it were true, can only prove that Jesus was more excellent than was foretold by the prophets, but that there was nothing less in him than was to be in the Messias. It was a matter so famous that the Arabian physicians, who can affirm no such things of their Mahomet, and yet not being able to deny it to be true of the holy Jesus, endeavour to elevate and lessen the thing by saying, ‘it is not wholly beyond the force of nature that a virgin should conceive:’ so that it was on all hands undeniable, that the mother of Jesus was a virgin, a mother without a man. This is that Jesus, at whose presence, before he was born, a babe in his mother’s belly also did leap for joy, who was also a person extraordinary himself, conceived in his mother’s old age, after a long barrenness, signified by an angel in the temple, to his father officiating his priestly office, who was also struck dumb for his not present believing: all the people saw it, and all his kindred were witnesses of his restitution, and he was named by the angel, and his office declared to be the forerunner of the holy Jesus; and this also was foretold by one of the old prophets; for the whole story of this Divine Person is a chain of providence and wonder, every link of which is a verification of a prophecy, and all of it is that thing which, from Adam to the birth of Jesus, was pointed at and hinted by all the prophets whose words in him passed perfectly into the event. This is that Jesus, who, as he was born without a father, so he was learned without a master, he was a man without age, a doctor in a child’s garment, disputing in the sanctuary at twelve years old. He was a sojourner in Egypt, because the poor babe, born of an indigent mother, was a formidable rival to a potent king; and this fear could not come from the design of the infant, but must needs arise from the illustriousness of the birth and the prophecies of the child, and the sayings of the learned, and the journey of the wise men, and the decrees of God: this journey, and the return, were both managed by the conduct of an angel and a divine dream,

—for to the Son of God all the angels did rejoice to minister. This blessed Person—made thus excellent by his Father, and glorious by miraculous consignations, and illustrious by the ministry of heavenly spirits, and proclaimed to Mary and to Joseph by two angels, to the shepherds by a multitude of the heavenly host, to the wise men by a prophecy and by a star, to the Jews by the shepherds, to the Gentiles by the three wise men, to Herod by the doctors of the law, and to himself perfectly known by the increasing his human nature in the bosom and heart of God, and by the fulness of the Spirit of God,—was yet pleased, for thirty years together, to live a humble, a laborious, a chaste and a devout, a regular and an even, a wise and an exemplary, a pious and an obscure life, without complaint, without sin, without design of fame or grandeur of spirit, till the time came that the clefts of the rock were to open, and the diamond give its lustre, and be worn in the diadems of kings: and then this person was wholly admirable; for he was ushered into the world by the voice of a loud crier in the wilderness, —a person austere and wise, of a strange life, full of holiness and full of hardness, and a great preacher of righteousness,—a man believed by all the people that he came from God,—one who in his own nation gathered disciples publicly, and (which amongst them was a great matter,) he was the doctor of a new institution, and baptized all the country. Yet this man, so great, so revered, so followed, so listened to by king and people, by doctors, and by idiots, by Pharisees and Sadducees, this man preached Jesus to the people, pointed out the Lamb of God, told that he must increase, and himself from all that fame must retire to give him place; he received him to baptism after having with duty and modesty declared his own unworthiness to give, but rather a worthiness to receive baptism from the holy hands of Jesus; but at the solemnity God sent down the holy Spirit upon his holy Son, and by a voice from heaven, a voice of thunder and (God was in that voice), declared that ‘this was his Son, and that he was delighted in him.’ This voice from heaven was such, so evident, so certain a conviction of what it did intend to prove, so known and accepted as the way of Divine revelation under the second temple, that at that time every man that desired a sign honestly, would have been satisfied with such a voice: it being the testimony by which God made all extraordinaries to be credible to his people, from the days of Ezra to the death of the nation. That there was such a voice, not only then, but divers times after, was as certain, and made as evident as things of that nature can ordinarily be made. For it being a matter of fact, cannot be supposed infinite, but limited to time and place, heard by a certain number of persons, and was as a clap of thunder upon ordinary accounts, which could be heard but by those who were within the sphere of its own activity; and reported by those to others, who are to give testimony as testimonies are required, which are credible under the test of two or three disinterested, honest, and true men; and though this was done in the presence of more, and oftener than once, yet it was a divine testimony but at first, but is to be conveyed by the means of men; and as God thundered from heaven at the giving of the law,—though that he did so, we have notice only from the books of Moses received from the Jewish nation,—so he did in the days of the Baptist, and so he did to Peter, James, and John, and so he did in the presence of the Pharisees and many of the common people: and as it is not to be supposed that all these would join their divided interests, for and against themselves, for the verification of a lie, so if they would have done it, they could not have done it without re-

proof of their own parties, who would have been glad by the discovery only to disgrace the whole story; but if the report of honest and just men so reputed, may be questioned for matter of fact, or may not be accounted sufficient to make faith when there is no pretence of men to the contrary,—besides that we can have no story transmitted to us, nor records kept, no acts of courts, no narratives of the days of old, no traditions of our fathers; so there could not be left in nature any usual instrument whereby God could, after the manner of men declare his own will to us, but either we should never know the will of heaven upon earth, or it must be that God must not only tell it once but always, and not only always to some men, but always to all men; and then, as there would be no use of history, or the honesty of men, and their faithfulness in telling any act of God in declaration of his will, so there would be perpetual necessity of miracles, and we could not serve God directly with our understanding, for there would be no such thing as faith, that is, of assent without conviction of understanding; and we could not please God with believing, because there would be in it nothing of the will, nothing of love and choice; and that faith which is, would be like that of Thomas, ‘to believe what we see or hear,’ and God should not at all govern upon earth unless he did continually come himself: for thus, all government, all teachers, all apostles, all messengers, would be needless, because they could not show to the eye what they told to the ears of men. And it might as well be disbelieved in all courts and by all princes, that this was not the letter of a prince, or the act of a man, or the writing of his hand; and so all human intercourse must cease, and all senses but the eye be useless as to this affair, or else to the ear all voices must be strangers but the principal, if, I say, no reports shall make faith. But it is certain, that when these voices were sent from heaven and heard upon earth, they prevailed amongst many that heard them not, and disciples were multiplied upon such accounts; or else it must be that none that did hear them, could be believed by any of their friends and neighbours; for if they were, the voice was as effective at the reflex and rebound as in the direct emission, and could prevail with them that believed their brother or their friend, as certainly as with them that believed their own ears and eyes.

I need not speak of the vast numbers of miracles which he wrought; miracles which were not more demonstrations of his power than of his mercy; for they had nothing of pompousness and ostentation, but infinitely of charity and mercy, and that permanent, and lasting, and often: he opened the eyes of the blind; he made the crooked straight; he made the weak strong; he cured fevers with the touch of his hand, and an issue of blood with the hem of his garment, and sore eyes with the spittle of his mouth and the clay of the earth; he multiplied the loaves and fishes: he raised the dead to life, a young maiden, the widow’s son of Nain, and Lazarus; and cast out devils by the word of his mouth; which he could never do but by the power of God. For Satan does not cast out Satan, nor a house fight against itself, if it means to stand long; and the devil could not help Jesus, because the holy Jesus taught men virtue, called them from the worshipping devils, taught them to resist the devil, to lay aside all those abominable idolatries by which the devil doth rule in the hearts of men: he taught men to love God, to flee from temptations to sin, to hate and avoid all those things of which the devil is guilty. For Christianity forbids pride, envy, malice, lying, and yet affirms that the devil is proud, envious, malicious, and the father of lies; and, therefore,

wherever Christianity prevails, the devil is not worshipped; and therefore he that can think, that a man, without the power of God, could overturn the devil's principles, cross his designs, weaken his strength, baffle him in his policies, befool him and turn him out of possession, and make him open his own mouth against himself, as he did often; and confess himself conquered by Jesus and tormented, as the oracle did to Augustus Cæsar, and the devil to Jesus himself; he, I say, that thinks a mere man can do this, knows not the weaknesses of a man, nor the power of an angel; but he that thinks this could be done by compact and by consent of the devil, must think him to be an intelligence without understanding,—a power without force,—a fool and a sot to assist a power against himself, and to persecute the power he did assist, to stir up the world to destroy the Christians, whose Master and Lord he did assist to destroy himself; and when we read that Porphyrius, a heathen, a professed enemy to Christianity, did say, that “since Jesus was worshipped, the gods could help no man,” that is, the gods which they worshipped; the poor, baffled, enervated demons; he must either think that the devils are as foolish as they are weak, or else that they did nothing towards this declination of their power; and therefore, that they suffer it by a power higher than themselves, that is, by the power of God in the hand of Jesus.

But besides that God gave testimony from heaven concerning him; he also gave this testimony of himself to have come from God, because that “he did God’s will;” for he that is a good man, and lives, by the laws of God and of his nation, a life innocent and simple, prudent and wise, holy and spotless, unproved and unsuspected,—he is certainly by all wise men, said, in a good sense, to be the son of God; but he who does well and speaks well, and calls all men to glorify and serve God, and serves no ends, but of holiness and charity, of wisdom of hearts and reformation of manners, this man carries great authority in his sayings, and ought to prevail with good men in good things, for good ends, which is all that is here required. But his nature was so sweet, his manners so humble, his words so wise and composed, his comportment so grave and winning, his answers so seasonable, his questions so deep, his reproof so severe and charitable, his pity so great and merciful, his preachings so full of reason and holiness, of weight and authority, his conversation so useful and beneficent, his poverty great but his alms frequent, his family so holy and religious, his and their employment so profitable, his meekness so incomparable, his passions without difference, save only where zeal or pity carried him on to worthy and apt expressions, a person that never laughed, but often wept in a sense of the calamities of others; he loved every man and hated no man, he gave counsel to the doubtful, and instructed the ignorant, he bound up the broken hearts, and strengthened the feeble knees, he relieved the poor, and converted the sinners, he despised none that came to him for relief, and as for those that did not, he went to them; he took all occasions of mercy that were offered him, and went abroad for more; he spent his days in preaching and healing, and his nights in prayers and conversation with God; he was obedient to laws, and subject to princes, though he was the prince of Judea in right of his mother, and of all the world in right of his father; the people followed him, but he made no conventions, and when they were made, he suffered no tumults; when they would have made him a king, he withdrew himself; when he knew they would put him to death, he offered himself; he knew men’s

hearts, and conversed secretly, and gave answer to their thoughts and prevented their questions; he would work a miracle rather than give offence, and yet suffer every offence rather than see God his Father dishonoured; he exactly kept the law of Moses, to which he came to put a period, and yet chose to signify his purpose only by doing acts of mercy upon their Sabbath, doing nothing which they should call a breach of a commandment, but healing sick people, a charity which themselves would do to beasts, and yet they were angry at him for doing it to their brethren. In all his life, and in all his conversation with his nation, he was innocent as an angel of light; and when, by the greatness of his worth, and the severity of his doctrine, and the charity of his miracles, and the noises of the people, and his immense fame in all that part of the world, and the multitude of his disciples, and the authority of his sermons, and his free reproof of their hypocrisy, and his discovery of their false doctrines and weak traditions, he had branded the reputation of the vicious rulers of the people, and they resolved to put him to death,—they who had the biggest malice in the world, and the weakest accusations, were forced to supply their want of articles against him by making truth to be his fault, and his office to be his crime, and his open confession of what was asked him, to be his article of condemnation: and yet, after all this, they could not persuade the competent judge to condemn him, or to find him guilty of any fault; and therefore they were forced to threaten him with Cæsar's name, against whom then they would pretend him to be an enemy, though in their charge they neither proved, nor indeed laid it against him; and yet, to whatsoever they objected he made no return, but his silence and his innocence were remarkable and evident, without labour and reply, and needed no more argument than the sun needs an advocate to prove that he is the brightest star in the firmament.

Well, so it was, they crucified him: and when they did, they did as much put out the eye of heaven as destroy the Son of God; for when, with an incomparable sweetness, and a patience exemplary to all ages and sufferers, he endured affronts, examinations, scorns, insolencies of rude ungentle tradesmen, cruel whippings, injurious, unjust, and unreasonable usages from those whom he obliged by all the arts of endearment and offers of the biggest kindness,—at last he went to death as to the work which God appointed him, that he might become the world's sacrifice, and the great example of holiness, and the instance of representing by what way the world was to be made happy,—even by sufferings, and so entering into heaven:—that he might, I say, become the Saviour of his enemies, and the elder brother to his friends, and the Lord of glory, and the fountain of its emanation. Then it was that God gave new testimonies from heaven: the sun was eclipsed all the while he was upon the cross, and yet the moon was in the full; that is, he lost his light, not because any thing in nature did invest him, but because the God of nature (as a heathen at that very time confessed, who yet saw nothing of this sad iniquity) did suffer. The rocks did rend, the veil of the temple divided of itself and opened the inclosures, and disparked the sanctuary, and made it pervious to the Gentiles' eye: the dead arose, and appeared in Jerusalem to their friends; the centurion and divers of the people smote their hearts, and were by these strange indications convinced that he was the Son of God. His garments were parted, and lots cast upon his inward coat: they gave him vinegar and gall to drink: they brake not a bone of him, but they pierced his side with a spear, looking upon him whom

they had pierced; according to the prophecies of him, which were so clear, and descended to minutes and circumstances of his passion, that there was nothing left by which they could doubt whether this were he or no, who was to come into the world. But after all this, that all might be finally verified and no scruple left after three days' burial, a great stone being rolled to the face of the grave, and the stone sealed, and a guard of soldiers placed about it, he arose from the grave, and for forty days together conversed with his followers and disciples, and beyond all suspicion was seen of five hundred brethren at once, which is a number too great to give their consent and testimony to a lie; and it being so publicly and confidently affirmed at the very time it was done, and for ever after urged by all Christians, used as the most mighty demonstration, proclaimed, preached, talked of, even upbraided to the gainsayers, affirmed by eye-witnesses, persuaded to the kindred and friends, and the relatives and companions of all those five hundred persons who were eye-witnesses, it is infinitely removed from a reasonable suspicion; and at the end of those days was taken up into heaven in the sight of many of them, as Elias was in the presence of Elisha.

Now he of whom all these things are true, must needs be more than a mere man; and that they were true, was affirmed by very many eye-witnesses, men who were innocent, plain men, men that had no bad ends to serve, men that looked for no preferment by the thing in this life; men to whom their master told they were to expect not crowns and sceptres, not praise of men or wealthy possessions, not power and ease, but a voluntary casting away care and attendance upon secular affairs that they might attend their ministry; poverty and prisons, trouble and vexation, persecution and labour, whippings and banishment, bonds and death; and for a reward they must stay till a good day came, but that was not to be at all in this world; and when the day of restitution and recompense should come, they should never know till it came, but upon the hope of this and the faith of Jesus, and the word of God so taught, so consigned, they must rely wholly and for ever. Now let it be considered, how could matters of fact be proved better? and how could this be any thing, but such as to rely upon matters of fact? What greater certainty can we have of any thing, that was ever done which we saw not, or heard not,—but by the report of wise and honest persons? especially since they were such, whose life and breeding was so far from ambition and pompousness, that as they could not naturally and reasonably hope for any great number of proselytes, so the fame that could be hoped for amongst them, as it must be a matter of their own procuring, and consequently uncertain,—so it must needs be very inconsiderable, not fit to outweigh the danger and the loss, nor yet at all valuable by them whose education and pretences were against it. These we have plentifully. But if these men are numerous and united, it is more. Then we have more; for so many did affirm these things which they saw and heard, that thousands of people were convinced of the truth of them: but then if these men offer their oath, it is yet more, but yet not so much as we have, for they sealed those things with their blood; they gave their life for a testimony; and what reward can any man expect, if he gives his life for a lie? Who shall make him recompense, or what can tempt him to do it knowingly? But after all, it is to be remembered, that as God hates lying, so he hates incredulity: as we must not believe a lie, so neither stop up our eyes and ears against truth; and what we do every minute of our lives in mat-

ters of little and of great concernment, if we refuse to do in our religion,—which yet is to be conducted as other human affairs are, by human instruments and arguments of persuasion proper to the nature of the thing,—it is an obstinacy that is as contrary to human reason as it is to Divine faith.

These things relate to the person of the holy Jesus; and prove sufficiently that it was extraordinary,—that it was Divine,—that God was with him,—that his power wrought in him; and, therefore, that it was his will which Jesus taught, and God signed. But then if nothing of all this had been, yet even the doctrine itself proves itself Divine and to come from God.

For it is a doctrine perfective of human nature, that teaches us to love God and to love one another, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man; it propines to us the noblest, the highest, and the bravest pleasures of the world; the joys of charity, the rest of innocence, the peace of quiet spirits, the wealth of beneficence, and forbids us only to be beasts and to be devils; it allows all that God and nature intended, and only restrains the excrescencies of nature, and forbids us to take pleasure in that which is the only entertainment of devils, in murders and revenges, malice and spiteful words and actions; it permits corporal pleasures where they can best minister to health and societies, to conversation of families and honour of communities; it teaches men to keep their words that themselves may be secured in all their just interests, and to do good to others that good may be done to them; it forbids biting one another, that we may not be devoured by one another; and commands obedience to superiors, that we may not be ruined in confusions; it combines governments, and confirms all good laws, and makes peace, and opposes and prevents wars, where they are not just, and where they are not necessary. It is a religion that is life and spirit, not consisting in ceremonies and external amusements, but in the services of the heart, and the real fruit of the lips and hands, that is, of good words and good deeds; it bids us to do that to God which is agreeable to his excellencies,—that is, worship him with the best thing we have, and make all things else minister to it; it bids us to do that to our neighbour by which he may be better: it is the perfection of the natural law, and agreeable to our natural necessities, and promotes our natural ends and designs: it does not destroy reason, but instructs it in very many things, and complies with it in all; it hath in it both heat and light, and is not more effectual than it is beauteous; it promises everything that we can desire, and yet promises nothing but what it does effect; it proclaims war against all vices, and generally does command every virtue; it teaches us with ease to mortify those affections which reason durst scarce reprove, because she hath not strength enough to conquer; and it does create in us those virtues, which reason of herself never knew,—and, after they are known, could never approve sufficiently: it is a doctrine in which nothing is superfluous or burdensome, nor yet is there any thing wanting, which can procure happiness to mankind, or by which God can be glorified: and if wisdom, and mercy, and justice, and simplicity, and holiness, and purity, and meekness, and contentedness, and charity, be images of God and rays of divinity, then that doctrine in which all these shine so gloriously, and in which nothing else is ingredient, must needs be from God; and that all this is true in the doctrine of Jesus, needs no other probation but the reading the words.

For that the words of Jesus are contained in the Gospels, that is, in the writings of them who were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the actions

and sermons of Jesus, is not at all to be doubted; for in every sect we believe their own records of doctrine and institution; for it is madness to suppose the Christians to pretend to be servants of the laws of Jesus, and yet to make a law of their own which he made not: no man doubts but that the Alcoran is the law of Mahomet, that the Old Testament contains the religion of the Jews; and the authority of these books is proved by all the arguments of the religion, for all the arguments persuading to the religion are intended to prove no other than is contained in those books; and these having been for 1500 years and more, received absolutely by all Christian assemblies, if any man shall offer to make a question of their authority, he must declare his reasons,—for the disciples of the religion have sufficient presumption, security, and possession, till they can be reasonably disturbed; but that now they can never be, is infinitely certain, because we have a long, immemorial, universal tradition that these books were written in those times, by those men whose names they bear; they were accepted by all churches at the very first notice, except some few of the later, which were first received by some churches, and then consented to by all, they were acknowledged by the same, and by the next age for genuine, their authority published, their words cited, appeals made to them in all questions of religion, because it was known and confessed that they wrote nothing but what they knew, so that they were not deceived; and to say they would lie must be made to appear by something extrinsic to this inquiry, and was never so much as plausibly pretended by any adversaries, and it being a matter of another man's will, must be declared by actions, or not at all. But, besides, the men that wrote them were to be believed because they did miracles,—they wrote prophecies, which are verified by the event; persons were cured at their sepulchres, a thing so famous that it was confessed even by the enemies of the religion: and after all, that which the world ought to rely upon, is the wisdom, and the providence, and the goodness of God: all which it concerned to take care that the religion, which himself so adorned and proved by miracles and mighty signs, should not be lost, nor any false writings be obtruded instead of true, lest without our fault, the will of God become impossible to be obeyed. But to return to the thing: all those excellent things which singly did make famous so many sects of philosophers, and remarked so many princes of their sects, all of them united, and many more, which their eyes, dark and dim, could not see, are heaped together in this system of wisdom and holiness. Here are plain precepts full of deepest mystery; here are the measures of holiness and approaches to God described; obedience and conformity, mortification of the body, and elevations of the spirit, abstractions from earth, and arts of society and union with heaven, degrees of excellencies, and tendencies to perfection, imitations of God, and conversations with him; these are the heights and descents, upon the plain grounds of natural reason, and natural religion,—for there is nothing commanded but what our reason by nature ought to choose, and yet nothing of natural reason taught but what is heightened and made more perfect by the Spirit of God; and when there is any thing in the religion, that is against flesh and blood, it is only when flesh and blood is against us and against reason, when flesh and blood either would hinder us from great felicity, or bring us into great misery. To conclude, it is such a law, that nothing can hinder men to receive and entertain, but a pertinacious baseness and love to vice,

and none can receive it but those who resolve to be good and excellent; and if the holy Jesus had come into the world with less splendour of power and mighty demonstrations, yet even the excellency of what he taught, makes him alone fit to be the master of the world.

But, then, let us consider what this excellent person did effect, and with what instruments he brought so great things to pass. He was to put a period to the rites of Moses, and the religion of the temple, of which the Jews were zealous even unto pertinacy; to reform the manners of all mankind, to confound the wisdom of the Greeks, to break in pieces the power of the devil, to destroy the worship of all false gods, to pull down their oracles, and change their laws, and by principles wise and holy to reform the false discourses of the world. But see what was to be taught, a trinity in the unity of the godhead, that is the Christian arithmetic,—“Three are one, and one are three,” so Lucian in his *Philopatriss*, or some other, derides the Christian doctrine; see their philosophy, “all things are made of nothing;”—and a Man-God and a God-Man, the same person finite and infinite, born in time, and yet from all eternity the Son of God, but yet born of a woman, and she a maid, but yet a mother; resurrection of the dead, re-union of soul and body; this was part of the Christian physics or their natural philosophy. But, then, certainly their moral was easy and delicious. It is so indeed, but not to flesh and blood, whose appetites it pretends to regulate or to destroy, to restrain or else to mortify: fasting and penance, and humility, loving our enemies, restitution of injuries, and self-denial, and taking up the cross, and losing all our goods, and giving our life for Jesus: as the other was hard to believe, so this is as hard to do. But for whom and under whose conduct was all this to be believed, and all this to be done, and all this to be suffered? surely for some glorious and mighty prince, whose splendour as far outshines the Roman empire, as the jewels of Cleopatra outshone the swaddling clothes of the babe at Bethlehem. No, it was not so neither. For all this was for Jesus, whom his followers preached; a poor babe born in a stable, the son of a carpenter, cradled in a cratch, swaddled in poor clouts; it was for him whom they indeed called a God, but yet who, all the world knew, and they themselves said, was whipped at a post, nailed to a cross; he fell under the malice of the Jews his countrymen, and the power of his Roman lords, a cheap and a pitiful sacrifice without beauty and without splendour. The design is great, but does not yet seem possible; but therefore, let us see what instruments the holy Jesus chose to effect these so mighty changes, to persuade so many propositions, to endure so great sufferings, to overcome so great enemies, to master so many impossibilities, which this doctrine and this law from this master were sure to meet withal.

Here, here it is that the Divinity of the power is proclaimed. When a man goes to war, he raises as great an army as he can to out-number his enemy; but when God fights, three hundred men that lap like a dog, are sufficient; nay, one word can dissolve the greatest army. He that means to effect any thing, must have means of his own proportionable; and if they be not, he must fail, or derive them from the mighty. See, then, with what instruments the holy Jesus sets upon this great reformation of the world. Twelve men of obscure and poor birth, of contemptible trades and quality, without learning, without breeding; these men were sent into the midst of a knowing and wise world to dispute with the most famous philosophers of Greece, to outwit all the learning of Athens, to out-preach all the Roman

orators; to introduce into a newly settled empire, which would be impatient of novelties and change, such a change as must destroy all their temples, or remove thence all their gods: against which change all the zeal of the world, and all the passions, and all the seeming pretences which they could make, must needs be violently opposed; a change that introduced new laws and caused them to reverse the old, to change that religion under which their fathers long did prosper, and under which the Roman empire obtained so great a grandeur, for a religion which in appearance was silly and humble, meek and peaceable, not apt indeed to do harm; but exposing men to all the harm in the world, abating their courage, blunting their swords, teaching peace and unactiveness, and making the soldiers' arms in a manner useless, and untying their military girdle; a religion which contradicted their reasons of state, and erected new judicatories, and made the Roman courts to be silent and without causes; a religion that gave countenance to the poor and pitiful (but in a time when riches were adored, and ambition esteemed the greatest nobleness, and pleasure thought to be the chiefest good); it brought no peculiar blessing to the rich or mighty, unless they would become poor and humble in some real sense or other; a religion that would change the face of things, and would also pierce into the secrets of the soul, and unravel all the intrigues of hearts, and reform all evil manners, and break vile habits into gentleness and counsel: that such a religion in such a time, preached by such mean persons, should triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the sermons of the eloquent, and the power of princes, and the interest of estates, and the inclinations of nature, and the blindness of zeal, and the force of custom, and the pleasures of sin, and the busy arts of the devil, that is, against wit, and power, and money, and religion, and wilfulness, and fame, and empire, which are all the things in the world that can make a thing impossible; this, I say, could not be by the proper force of such instruments; for no man can span heaven with an infant's palm, nor govern wise empires with diagrams. It were impudence to send a footman to command Cæsar to lay down his arms, to disband his legions, and throw himself into Tiber, or keep a tavern next to Pompey's theatre; but if a sober man shall stand alone unarmed, undefended, or unprovided; and shall tell that he will make the sun stand still, or remove a mountain, or reduce Xerxes's army to the scantling of a single troop, he that believes he will and can do this, must believe he does it by a higher power than he can yet perceive: and so it was in the present transaction. For that the holy Jesus made invisible powers to do him visible honours, that his apostles hunted the demons from their tripods, their navels, their dens, their hollow pipes, their temples, and their altars, that he made the oracles silent, as Lucian, Porphyry, Celsus, and other heathens confess; that against the new order of things, which, let them be ever so profitable or good, do yet suffer reproach, and cannot prevail unless they commence in a time of advantage and favour,—yet that this should flourish like the palm by pressure, grow glorious by opposition, thrive by persecution, and was demonstrated by objections,—argues a higher cause than the immediate instrument. Now how this higher cause did intervene is visible and notorious: the apostles were not learned, but the holy Jesus promises that he would send down wisdom from above from the Father of spirits; they had no power, but they should be invested with power from on high; they were ignorant and timorous, but he would make them learned and confident, and

so he did : he promised that, in a few days, he would send the Holy Ghost upon them,—and he did so : after ten days, they felt and saw a glorious immission from heaven, lights of movable fire sitting upon their heads, and that light did illuminate their hearts, and the mighty rushing wind inspired them with a power of speaking divers languages, and brought to their remembrance all that Jesus did and taught,—and made them wise to conduct souls, and bold to venture, and prudent to advise, and powerful to do miracles, and witty to convince gainsayers, and hugely instructed in the Scriptures, and gave them the spirit of government and the spirit of prophecy. This thing was so public, that, at the first notice of it, three thousand souls were converted on that very day, at the very time when it was done; for it was certainly a visible demonstration of an invisible power, that ignorant persons who were never taught, should, in an instant, speak all the languages of the Roman empire; and indeed this thing was so necessary to be so, and so certain that it was so, so public and so evident, and so reasonable, and so useful, that it is not easy to say whether it was the indication of a greater power, or a greater wisdom. And now the means was proportionable enough to the biggest end: without learning they could not confute the learned world, but therefore God became their teacher; without power they could not break the devil's violence, but therefore God gave them power; without courage they could not contest against all the violence of the Jews and Gentiles, but therefore God was their strength, and gave them fortitude; without great caution and providence they could not avoid the traps of crafty persecutors, but therefore God gave them caution, and made them provident: and as Bezaleel and Aholiab* received the Spirit of God, the spirit of understanding, to enable them to work excellently in the tabernacle, so had the apostles, to make them wise for the work of God and the ministeries of his diviner tabernacle, “which God pitched, and not man.” Immediately upon this, the apostles, to make a fulness of demonstration and an undeniable conviction, gave the Spirit to others also, to Jews and Gentiles, and to the men of Samaria, and they spake with tongues and prophesied; then they preached to all nations, and endured all persecutions, and cured all diseases, and raised the dead to life, and were brought before tribunals, and confessed the name of Jesus, and convinced the blasphemous Jews out of their own prophets, and not only prevailed upon women and weak men, but even upon the bravest and wisest. All the disciples of John the Baptist, the Nazarenes and Ebionites, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, Sergius the President, Dionysius an Athenian judge, and Polycarpus, Justinus, and Irenæus, Athenagoras and Origen, Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria, who could not be such fools, as, upon a matter not certainly true but probably false, to unravel their former principles, and to change their liberty for a prison, wealth for poverty, honour for disreputation, life for death, if by such exchange they had not been secured of truth and holiness and the will of God.

But above all these was Saul, a bold and witty, zealous and learned young man, who, going with letters to persecute the Christians of Damascus, was, by a light from heaven, called from his furious march, reproved by God's angel for persecuting the cause of Jesus, was sent to the city, baptized by a Christian minister, instructed and sent abroad; and he became the

* Exod. xxxvi. 1.

prodigy of the world for learning and zeal, for preaching and writing, for labour and sufferance, for government and wisdom; he was admitted to see the holy Jesus after the Lord was taken into heaven; he was taken up into paradise; he conversed with angels; he saw unspeakable rays of glory; and besides that himself said it, who had no reason to lie, who would get nothing by it here but a conjugation of troubles, and who should get nothing by it hereafter if it were false;—besides this I say, that he did all those acts of zeal and obedience for the promotion of the religion, does demonstrate he had reason extraordinary for so sudden a change, so strange a labour, so frequent and incomparable sufferings: and, therefore, as he did and suffered so much upon such glorious motives, so he spared not to publish it to all the world, he spake it to kings and princes, he told it to the envious Jews: he had partners of his journey who were witnesses of the miraculous incident, and in his publication he urged the notoriousness of the fact, as a thing not feigned, not private, but done at noon-day, under the test of competent persons: and it was a thing that proved itself, for it was effective of a present, a great, and a permanent change.

But now it is no new wonder, but a pursuance of the same conjugation of great and divine things, that the fame and religion of Jesus was, with so incredible a swiftness, scattered over the face of the habitable world, from one end of the earth unto the other; it filled all Asia immediately, it passed presently to Europe, and to the furthest Africans; and all the way it went, it told nothing but a holy and an humble story, that he who came to bring it into the world, died an ignominious death; and yet this death did not take away their courage, but added much: for they could not fear death for that Master, whom they knew to have, for their sakes, suffered death, and come to life again. But now infinite numbers of persons, of all sexes, and all ages, and all countries, came unto the holy crucifix; and he that was crucified in the reign of Tiberius, was, in the time of Nero, even in Rome itself, and in Nero's family by many persons, esteemed for a God; and it was upon public record that he was so acknowledged; and this was by a Christian, Justin Martyr, urged to the senate, and to the emperors themselves, who, if it had been otherwise, could easily have confuted the bold allegation of the Christian, who yet did die for that Jesus, who was so speedily reputed for a God; the cross was worn upon breasts, printed in the air, drawn upon foreheads, carried on banners, put upon crowns imperial; and yet the Christians were sought for to punishments, and exquisite punishments sought for to them; their goods were confiscated, their names odious, prisons were their houses, and so many kinds of tortures invented for them, that Domitius Ulpianus hath spent seven books in describing the variety of tortures the poor Christian was put to at his first appearing; and yet in despite of all this, and ten thousand other objections and impossibilities, whatsoever was for them, made the religion grow, and whatsoever was against them, made it grow; if they had peace, the religion was prosperous,—if they had persecution, it was still prosperous; if princes favoured them, the world came in because the Christians lived holily; if princes were incensed, the world came in because the Christians died bravely. They sought for death with greediness; they desired to be grinded in the teeth of lions: and with joy they beheld the wheels and the bended trees, the racks and the gibbets, the fires and the burning irons, which were like the chair of Elias to them, instruments to carry them to heaven, into the bosom of their beloved Jesus.

Who would not acknowledge the divinity of this person, and the excellency of this institution, that should see infants to weary the hands of hangmen for the testimony of Jesus? and wise men preach this doctrine for no other visible reward, but shame and death, poverty and banishment? and hangmen converted by the blood of martyrs springing upon their faces, which their impious hands and cords have strained through their flesh? Who would not have confessed the honour of Jesus, when he should see miracles done at the tombs of martyrs, and devils trembling at the mention of the name of Jesus, and the world running to the honour of the poor Nazarene, and kings and queens kissing the feet of the poor servants of Jesus? Could a few fishermen and a publican effect all this for the son of a poor maiden of Judea? Can we suppose all the world, or so great a part of mankind, can consent by chance, or suffer such changes for nothing? or for any thing less than this? The son of the poor maiden was the Son of God, and the fishermen spake by a divine spirit, and they caught the world with holiness and miracles, with wisdom and power bigger than the strength of all the Roman legions. And what can be added to all this, but this thing alone to prove the divinity of Jesus? He is a God, or at least taught by God, who can foretell future contingencies; and so did the holy Jesus, and so did his disciples.

Our blessed Lord, while he was alive, foretold, that, after his death, his religion should flourish more than when he was alive: he foretold persecutions to his disciples; he foretold the mission of the Holy Ghost to be in a very few days after his ascension, which within ten days came to pass; he prophesied that the fact of Mary Magdalene in anointing the head and feet of her Lord, should be public and known as the Gospel itself, and spoken of in the same place; he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and the signs of its approach, and that it should be by war; and particularly, after the manner of prophets, symbolically named the nation should do it, pointing out the Roman eagles; he foretold his death, and the manner of it; and plainly, beforehand, published his resurrection, and told them it should be the sign to that generation, viz. the great argument to prove him to be the Christ; he prophesied that there should arise false Christs after him, and it came to pass, to the extreme great calamity of the nation; and lastly, he foretold that his beloved disciple, St John, should tarry upon the earth till his coming again, that is, to his coming to judgment upon Jerusalem; and that his religion should be preached to the Gentiles, that it should be scattered over all the world, and be received by all nations; that it should stay upon the face of the earth till his last coming to judge all the world, and that "the gates of hell should not be able to prevail against his church;" which prophecy is made good thus long, till this day, and is as a continual argument to justify the divinity of the author: the continuance of the religion helps to continue it, for it proves that it came from God, who foretold that it should continue; and therefore it must continue, because it came from God; and therefore it came from God, because it does and shall for ever continue, according to the word of the holy Jesus.

But after our blessed Lord was entered into glory, the disciples also were prophets; Agabus foretold the dearth that was to be in the Roman empire in the days of Claudius Cæsar, and that St Paul should be bound at Jerusalem; St Paul foretold the entering in of heretics into Asia after his departure; and he, and St Peter, and St Jude, and generally the rest of

the apostles, had two great predictions, which they used, not only as a verification of the doctrine of Jesus, but as a means to strengthen the hearts of the disciples, who were so broken with persecution: the one was, that there should arise a sect of vile men, who should be enemies to religion and government, and cause a great apostasy, which happened notoriously in the sect of the Gnostics, which those three apostles and St John notoriously and plainly do describe; and the other was, that although the Jewish nation did mightily oppose the religion, it should be but for a while, for they should be destroyed in a short time, and their nation made extremely miserable; but for the Christians, if they would fly from Jerusalem, and go to Pella, there should not a hair of their head perish. The verification of this prophecy the Christians extremely longed for, and wondered it staid so long, and began to be troubled at the delay, and suspected all was not well, when the great proof of their religion was not verified; and while they were in thoughts of heart concerning it, the sad catalysis did come, and swept away one million one hundred thousand of the nation, and from that day forward the nation was broken in pieces with intolerable calamities, they are scattered over the face of the earth, and are a vagabond nation, but yet like oil in a vessel of wine, broken into bubbles, but kept in their own circles, and they shall never be a united people till they are servants of the holy Jesus; but shall remain without priest or temple, without altar or sacrifice, without city or country, without the land of promise, or the promise of a blessing, till our Jesus is their High Priest, and the Shepherd to gather them into his fold: and this very thing is a mighty demonstration against the Jews by their own prophets; for when Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Malachi, had prophesied the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, and the change of the old law, and the introduction of a new by the Messias,—that this was he, was therefore certain, because he taught the world a new law; and presently after the publication of this, the old was abrogated, and not only went into desuetude, but into a total abolition among all the world; and for those of the remnant of the scattered Jews, who obstinately blaspheme, the law is become impossible to them, and they placed in such circumstances that they need not dispute concerning its obligation: for it being external and corporal, ritual, and at last made also local, when the circumstances are impossible, the law that was wholly ceremonial and circumstantial must needs pass away; and when they have lost their priesthood, they cannot retain the law; as no man takes care to have his beard shaved, when his head is off.

And it is a wonder to consider, how the anger of God is gone out upon that miserable people, and that so great a blindness is fallen upon them; it being evident and notorious, that the Old Testament was nothing but a shadow and umbrage of the New; that the prophecies of that are plainly verified in this; that all the predictions of the Messias are most undeniably accomplished in the person of Jesus Christ, so that they cannot, with any plausibleness or colour, be turned any other way, and be applied to any other person; although the Jews make illiterate allegations, and prodigious dreams, by which they have fooled themselves for sixteen hundred years together, and still hope without reason, and are confident without revelation, and pursue a shadow while they quit the glorious body; while, in the mean time, the Christian prays for his conversion, and is at rest in the truth of Jesus, and hath certain inexpressible confidences and internal lights, clarities of the Holy Spirit of God, and loves to the holy Jesus, produced in his soul,—

that he will die when he cannot dispute, and is satisfied and he knows not how, and is sure by comforts, and comforted by the excellency of his belief, which speaks nothing but holiness, and light and reason, and peace and satisfactions infinite; because he is sure that all the world can be happy if they would live by the religion of Jesus, and that neither societies of men nor single persons can have felicity but by this,—and that, therefore, God, who so decrees to make men happy, hath also decreed that it shall for ever be upon the face of the earth, till the earth itself shall be no more. Amen.

Now if, against this vast heap of things, any man shall but confront the pretences of any other religion, and see how they fail both of reason and holiness, of wonder and divinity, how they enter by force, and are kept up by human interests, how ignorant and unholy, how unlearned and pitiful are their pretences, the darkenesses of these must add great eminency to the brightness of that. For the Jews' religion, which came from heaven, is, therefore, not now to be practised, because it did come from heaven, and was to expire into the Christian, it being nothing but the image of this perfection; and the Jews needed no other argument but this, that God hath made theirs impossible now to be done,—for he that ties to ceremonies and outward usages, temples and altars, sacrifices and priests, troublesome and expensive rites, and figures of future signification, means that there should be an abode and fixed dwelling, for these are not to be done by an ambulatory people; and, therefore, since God hath scattered the people into atoms and crumbs of society, without temple or priest, without sacrifice or altar, without urin or thummim, without prophet or vision, even communicating with them no way but by ordinary providence, it is but too evident, that God hath nothing to do with them in the matter of that religion, but that it is expired, and no way obligatory to them or pleasing to him, which is become impossible to be acted: whereas the Christian religion is as eternal as the soul of a man, and can no more cease than our spirits can die, and can worship upon mountains and caves, in fields and churches, in peace and war, in solitude and society, in persecution and in sunshine, by night and by day, and be solemnized by clergy and laity in the essential parts of it, and is the perfection of the soul, and the highest reason of man, and the glorification of God.

But for the heathen religions, it is evidently to be seen, that they are nothing but an abuse of the natural inclination which all men have to worship a God, whom because they know not, they guess at in the dark; for that they know there is and ought to be something that hath the care and providence of their affairs. But the body of their religion is nothing but little arts of governments, and stratagems of princes, and devices to secure the government of new usurpers, or to make obedience to the laws sure, by being sacred, and to make the yoke that was not natural, pleasant by something that is. But yet for the whole body of it, who sees not that their worshippings could not be sacred, because they were done by something that is impure? They appeased their gods with adulteries and impure mixtures, by such things as Cato was ashamed to see, by gluttonous eatings of flesh, and impious drinkings: and they did “*litare in humano sanguine*,” they sacrificed men, and women, and children to their demons,—as is notorious in the rights of Bacchus Omesta amongst the Greeks, and of Jupiter to whom a Greek and Greekess, a Galatian and Galatess, were yearly offered; in the answers of the oracle to Calchas, as appears in Homer and

Virgil; who sees not that crimes were warranted by the example of their immortal gods, and that what did dishonour themselves, they sang to the honour of their gods, whom they affirmed to be passionate and proud, jealous and revengeful, amorous and lustful, fearful and impatient, drunken and sleepy, weary and wounded; that the religions were made lasting by policy and force, by ignorance and the force of custom, by the preferring an inveterate error, and loving of a quiet and prosperous evil, by the arguments of pleasure and the correspondences of sensuality, by the fraud of oracles and the patronage of vices; and because they feared every change as an earthquake, as supposing overturnings of their old error to be the eversion of their well established governments: and it had been ordinarily impossible that ever Christianity should have entered, if the nature and excellency of it had not been such as to enter like rain into a fleece of wool, or the sun into a window without noise or violence, without emotion and disordering the political constitution, without causing trouble to any man but what his own ignorance or peevishness was pleased to spin out of his own bowels; but did establish governments, secure obedience; made the laws firm, and the persons of princes to be so sacred; it did not oppose force by force, nor ‘strike princes for justice;’ it defended itself against enemies by patience, and overcame them by kindness; it was the great instrument of God to demonstrate his power in our weaknesses, and to do good to mankind by the imitation of his excellent goodness.

Lastly; He that considers concerning the religion and person of Mahomet, that he was a vicious person, lustful and tyrannical,—that he propounded incredible and ridiculous propositions to his disciples,—that it entered by the sword, by blood and violence, by murder and robbery,—that it propounds sensual rewards, and allures to compliance, by bribing our basest lusts, that it conserves itself by the same means it entered; that it is unlearned and foolish, against reason, and the discourses of all wise men,—that it did no miracles and made false prophecies: in short, that in the person that founded it, in the article it persuades, in the manner of prevailing, in the reward it offers, it is unholy, and foolish, and rude; it must needs appear to be void of all pretence, and that no man of reason can ever be fairly persuaded by arguments, that it is the daughter of God, and came down from heaven. Since, therefore, there is nothing to be said for any other religion, and so very much for Christianity, every one of whose pretences can be proved as well as the things themselves do require, and as all the world expects such things should be proved; it follows, that the Holy Jesus is the Son of God, that his religion is commanded by God, and is that way by which he will be worshipped and honoured, and that “there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, but only by the name of the Lord Jesus.” He that puts his soul upon this, cannot perish; neither can he be reproved, who hath so much reason and argument for his religion. I pray God, “my soul may be numbered amongst the Christians.”

A DISCOURSE OF THE NATURE, OFFICES, AND MEASURES, OF FRIENDSHIP, &c.

MADAM,—The wise Ben Sirach advised that we should not consult with a woman concerning her of whom she is jealous, neither with a coward in matters of war, nor with a merchant concerning exchange; and some other instances he gives of interested persons, to whom he would not have us hearken in any matter of counsel. For wherever the interest is secular or vicious, there the bias is not on the side of truth or reason, because these are seldom served by profit and low regards. But to consult with a friend in the matters of friendship, is like consulting with a spiritual person in religion; they who understand the secrets of religion, or the interior beauties of friendship, are the fittest to give answers in all inquiries concerning the respective subjects; because reason and experience are on the side of interest; and that which in friendship is most pleasing and most useful, is also most reasonable and most true; and a friend's fairest interest is the best measure of the conducting friendships: and therefore you who are so eminent in friendships, could also have given the best answer to your own inquiries, and you could have trusted your own reason, because it is not only greatly instructed by the direct notices of things, but also by great experience in the matter of which you now inquire.

But because I will not use any thing that shall look like an excuse, I will rather give you such an account which you can easily reprove, than by declining your commands, seem more safe in my prudence, than open and communicative in my friendship to you.

You first inquire, how far a dear and perfect friendship is authorized by the principles of Christianity?

To this I answer, that the word 'friendship,' in the sense we commonly mean by it, is not so much as named in the New Testament; and our religion takes no notice of it. You think it strange; but read on before you spend so much as the beginning of a passion or a wonder upon it. There is mention of "friendship with the world," and it is said to be "enmity with God;" but the word is nowhere else named, or to any other purpose in all the New Testament. It speaks of friends often; but by friends are meant our acquaintance, or our kindred, the relatives of our family, or our fortune, or our sect; something of society, or something of kindness, there is in it; a tenderness of appellation and civility, a relation made by gifts, or by duty, by services and subjection; and I think I have reason to be confident, that the word 'friend' (speaking of human intercourse) is no otherways used in the Gospels or Epistles, or Acts of the Apostles: and the reason of it is, the word 'friend' is of a large signification; and means all relations and societies, and whatsoever is not enemy. But by friendships, I suppose you mean the greatest love and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest sufferings, and the most exemplar faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds, of which brave men and women are capable. But then I must tell you that Christianity hath new christened it, and calls this charity. The Christian knows no enemy he hath; that is, though persons may be injurious to him, and unworthy in themselves, yet he knows none whom he is not first bound to forgive, which is indeed to make them on his part to be no ene-

mies, that is, to make that the word enemy shall not be perfectly contrary to friend, it shall not be a relative term and signify something on each hand, a relative and a correlative; and then he knows none whom he is not bound to love and pray for, to treat kindly and justly, liberally and obligingly. Christian charity is friendship to all the world; and when friendships were the noblest things in the world, charity was little, like the sun drawn into a chink, or his beams drawn into the centre of a burning-glass; but Christian charity is friendship expanded like the face of the sun when it mounts above the eastern hills; and I was strangely pleased when I saw something of this in Cicero; for I have been so pushed at by herds and flocks of people that follow any body that whistles to them, or drives them to pasture, that I am grown afraid of any truth that seems chargeable with singularity: but therefore, I say, glad I was when I saw Lælius in Cicero discourse thus: 'Nature hath made friendships and societies, relations and endearments; and by something or other we relate to all the world; there is enough in every man that is willing to make him become our friend; but when men contract friendships, they enclose the commons; and what nature intended should be every man's, we make proper to two or three.' Friendship is like rivers and the strand of seas, and the air, common to all the world; but tyrants, and evil customs, wars, and want of love, have made them proper and peculiar. But when Christianity came to renew our nature, and to restore our laws, and to increase her privileges, and to make her aptness to become religion, then it was declared that our friendships were to be as universal as our conversation; that is, actual to all with whom we converse, and potentially extended unto those with whom we did not. For he who was to treat his enemies with forgiveness and prayers, and love and beneficence, was indeed to have no enemies, and to have all friends.

So that to your question, how far a dear and perfect friendship is authorized by the principles of Christianity? the answer is ready and easy. It is warranted to extend to all mankind; and the more we love, the better we are; and the greater our friendships are, the dearer we are to God. Let them be as dear, and let them be as perfect, and let them be as many, as you can; there is no danger in it; only where the restraint begins, there begins our imperfection. It is not ill that you entertain brave friendships and worthy societies: it were well if you could love and if you could benefit all mankind; for I conceive that is the sum of all friendship.

I confess this is not to be expected of us in this world; but as all our graces here are but imperfect, that is, at the best they are but tendencies to glory; so our friendships are imperfect too, and but beginnings of a celestial friendship, by which we shall love every one as much as they can be loved. But then so we must here in our proportion; and indeed that is it that can make the difference; we must be friends to all, that is, apt to do good, loving them really, and doing to them all the benefits which we can, and which they are capable of. The friendship is equal to all the world, and of itself hath no difference; but is differenced only by accidents, and by the capacity or incapacity of them that receive it. Nature and religion are the bands of friendships; excellency and usefulness are its great endearments: society and neighbourhood, that is, the possibilities and the circumstances of converse, are the determinations and actualities of it. Now when men either are unnatural, or irreligious, they will not be friends; when they are neither excellent nor useful, they are not worthy to be friends; when they are stran-

gers or unknown, they cannot be friends actually and practically; but yet, as any man hath any thing of the good, contrary to those evils, so he can have and must have his share of friendship. For thus the sun is the eye of the world; and he is indifferent to the negro, or the cold Russian; to them that dwell under the line, and them that stand near the tropics; the scalded Indian, or the poor boy that shakes at the foot of the Riphean hills. But the fluxures of the heaven and the earth, the conveniency of abode, and the approaches to the north or south respectively, change the emanations of his beams; not that they do not pass always from him, but that they are not equally received below,—but by periods and changes, by little inlets and reflections, they receive what they can. And some have only a dark day and a long night from him, snows and white cattle, a miserable life, and a perpetual harvest of catarrhs and consumptions; apoplexies and dead palsies. But some have splendid fires, and aromatic spices, rich wines, and well-digested fruits, great wit and great courage; because they dwell in his eye, and look in his face, and are the courtiers of the sun, and wait upon him in his chambers of the east. Just so is it in friendship: some are worthy, and some are necessary; some dwell hard by, and are fitted for converse: nature joins some to us, and religion combines us with others; society and accidents, parity of fortune, and equal dispositions, do actuate our friendships: which of themselves and in their prime disposition are prepared for all mankind according as any one can receive them. We see this best exemplified by two instances and expressions of friendships and charity: viz., alms and prayers; every one that needs relief, is equally the object of our charity; but though to all mankind in equal needs we ought to be alike in charity; yet we signify this severally, and by limits, and distinct measures: the poor man that is near me, he whom I meet, he whom I love, he whom I fancy, he who did me benefit, he who relates to my family,—he rather than another; because my expressions being finite and narrow, and cannot extend to all in equal significations, must be appropriate to those, whose circumstances best fit me: and yet even to all I give my alms; to all the world that needs them: I pray for all mankind; I am grieved at every sad story I hear; I am troubled when I hear of a pretty bride murdered in her bride-chamber by an ambitious and enraged rival; I shed a tear when I am told that a brave king was misunderstood, then slandered, then imprisoned, and then put to death, by evil men: and I can never read the story of the Parisian massacre, or the Sicilian vespers, but my blood curdles, and I am disordered by two or three affections. A good man is a friend to all the world; and he is not truly charitable that does not wish well, and do good to all mankind in what he can. But though we must pray for all men, yet we say special litanies for brave kings, and holy prelates, and the wise guides of souls, for our brethren and relations, our wives and children.

The effect of this consideration is, that the universal friendship of which I speak, must be limited, because we are so: in those things where we stand next to immensity and infinity, as in good wishes and prayers, and a readiness to benefit all mankind, in these our friendships must not be limited: but in other things which pass under our hand and eye, our voices and our material exchanges; our hands can reach no further but to our arms' end, and our voices can but sound till the next air be quiet, and therefore they can have intercourse but within the sphere of their own activity; our

needs and our conversations are served by a few, and they cannot reach to all; where they can, they must; but where it is impossible, it cannot be necessary. It must therefore follow, that our friendships to mankind may admit variety as does our conversation; and as by nature we are made sociable to all, so we are friendly; but as all cannot actually be of our society, so neither can all be admitted to a special, actual friendship. Of some intercourses all men are capable, but not of all; men can pray for one another, and abstain from doing injuries to all the world, and be desirous to do all mankind good, and love all men; now this friendship we must pay to all, because we can; but if we can do no more to all, we must show our readiness to do more good to all, by actually doing more good to all them to whom we can.

To some we can, and therefore, there are nearer friendships to some than to others, according as there are natural or civil nearnesses, relations, and societies; and as I cannot express my friendships to all in equal measures and significations, that is, as I cannot do benefits to all alike, so neither am I tied to love all alike: for although there is much reason to love every man, yet there are more reasons to love some than others; and if I must love because there is reason I should, then I must love more, where there is more reason; and where there is a special affection and a great readiness to do good and to delight in certain persons towards each other, these are that special charity and endearment which philosophy calls friendship; but our religion calls love or charity. Now if the inquiry be concerning this special friendship, 1. How it can be appropriate, that is, who to be chosen to it; 2. How far it may extend, that is, with what expression signified; 3. How conducted? The answers will depend upon such considerations which will be neither useless nor unpleasant.

1. There may be a special friendship contracted for any special excellency whatsoever: because friendships are nothing but love and society mixed together, that is, a conversing with them whom we love; now for whatsoever we can love any one, for that we can be his friend; and since every excellency is a degree of amability, every such worthiness is a just and proper motive of friendship or loving conversation. But yet in these things there is an order and proportion. Therefore,

2. A good man is the best friend, and therefore soonest to be chosen, longer to be retained; and indeed never to be parted with, unless he cease to be that for which he was chosen.

But although virtue alone is the worthiest cause of amability, and can weigh down any one consideration; and therefore to a man that is virtuous, every man ought to be a friend; yet I do not mean the severe and philosophical excellences of some morose persons, who are indeed wise unto themselves, and exemplar to others. By virtue here I do not mean justice and temperance, charity and devotion; for these I am to love the man; but friendship is something more than that: friendship is the nearest love and the nearest society, of which the persons are capable: now justice is a good intercourse for merchants, as all men are that buy and sell; and temperance makes a man good company, and helps to make a wise man: but a perfect friendship requires something else; these must be in him that is chosen to be my friend, but for these I do not make him my privado, that is, my special and peculiar friend: but if he be a good man, then he is properly fitted to be my correlative in the noblest combination.

And for this we have the best warrant in the world: "for a just man scarcely will a man die;" the Syriac interpreter reads it, "for an *unjust* man scarcely will a man die," that is, a wicked man is at no hand fit to receive the expression of the greatest friendship; but all the Greek copies that ever I saw, or read of, read it as we do; "for a righteous man" or "a just man;" that is, justice and righteousness are not the nearest endearment of friendship; but for "a good man some will even dare to die," that is, for a man that is sweetly disposed, ready to do acts of goodness and to oblige others, to do things useful and profitable; for a loving man, a beneficent, bountiful man, one who delights in doing good to his friend, such a man may have the highest friendship, he may have a friend that will die for him. For 'the good man' is a profitable, useful person, and that is the band of an effective friendship. For I do not think that friendships are metaphysical nothings, created for contemplation, or that men or women should stare upon each other's faces, and make dialogues of news and prettinesses, and look babies in one another's eyes. Friendship is the allay of our sorrows, the ease of our passions, the discharge of our oppressions, the sanctuary to our calamities, the counsellor of our doubts, the clarity of our minds, the emission of our thoughts, the exercise and improvement of what we meditate. And although I love my friend because he is worthy, yet he is not worthy if he can do no good; I do not speak of accidental hinderances and misfortunes, by which the bravest man may become unable to help his child; but of the natural and artificial capacities of the man. He only is fit to be chosen for a friend, who can do those offices for which friendship is excellent. For (mistake not) no man can be loved for himself; our perfections in this world cannot reach so high; it is well if we would love God at that rate; and I very much fear, that if God did us no good, we might admire his beauties, but we should have but a small proportion of love towards him; and therefore it is, that God, to endear the obedience, that is, the love of his servants, signifies what benefits he gives us, what great good things he does for us. "I am the Lord God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt:" and, "Does Job serve God for nought?" and "he that comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder:" all his other greatnesses are objects of fear and wonder, it is his goodness that makes him lovely: and so it is in friendships. He only is fit to be chosen for a friend who can give counsel, or defend my cause, or guide me right, or relieve my need, or can and will, when I need it, do me good: only this I add: into the heaps of doing good, I will reckon 'loving me,' for it is a pleasure to be beloved: but when his love signifies nothing but kissing my cheek, or talking kindly, and can go no further, it is a prostitution of the bravery of friendship to spend it upon impertinent people, who are, it may be, loads to their families, but can never ease my loads: but my friend is a worthy person when he can become to me instead of God, a guide or a support, an eye, or a hand, a staff, or a rule.

There must be in friendship something to distinguish it from a companion, and a countryman from a schoolfellow or a gossip, from a sweetheart or a fellow-traveller: friendship may look in at any one of these doors, but it stays not anywhere till it come to be the best thing in the world. And when we consider that one man is not better than another, neither towards God nor towards man, but by doing better and braver things; we shall also see, that that which is most beneficent, is also most excellent; and there-

fore those friendships must needs be most perfect, where the friends can be most useful. For men cannot be useful but by worthinesses in the several instances : a fool cannot be relied upon for counsel; nor a vicious person for the advantages of virtue, nor a beggar for relief, nor a stranger for conduct, nor a tattler to keep a secret, nor a pitiless person trusted with my complaint, nor a covetous man with my child's fortune, nor a false person without a witness, nor a suspicious person with a private design; nor him that I fear, with the treasures of my love : but he that is wise and virtuous, rich and at hand, close and merciful, free of his money and tenacious of a secret, open and ingenuous, true and honest, is of himself an excellent man; and therefore fit to be beloved; and he can do good to me in all capacities where I can need him, and therefore is fit to be a friend. I confess we are forced in our friendship to abate some of these ingredients; but full measures of friendship would have full measures of worthiness; and according as any defect is in the foundation, in the relation also there may be imperfection : and indeed I shall not blame the friendship so it be worthy, though it be not perfect; not only because friendship is charity, which cannot be perfect here, but because there is not in the world a perfect cause of perfect friendship.

If you can suspect that this discourse can suppose friendship to be mercenary, and to be defective in the greatest worthiness of it, which is to love our friend for our friend's sake, I shall easily be able to defend myself; because I speak of the election and reasons of choosing friends: after he is chosen, do as nobly as you talk, and love as purely as you dream, and let your conversation be as metaphysical as your discourse, and proceed in this method, till you be confuted by experience; yet till then, the case is otherwise when we speak of choosing one to be my friend: he is not my friend till I have chosen him, or loved him; and if any man inquires whom he shall choose or whom he should love, I suppose it ought not to be answered, that we should love him who hath least amability, that we should choose him who hath least reason to be chosen. But if it be answered, he is to be chosen to be my friend who is most worthy in himself, not he that can do most good to me; I say here is a distinction but no difference; for he is most worthy in himself, who can do most good; and if he can love me too, that is, if he will do me all the good he can, or that I need, then he is my friend and he deserves it. And it is impossible from a friend to separate a will to do me good : and therefore I do not choose well, if I choose one that hath not power : for if it may consist with the nobleness of friendship, to desire that my friend be ready to do me benefit or support, it is not sense to say, it is ignoble to desire he should really do it when I need; and if it were not for pleasure or profit, we might as well be without a friend as have him.

Among all the pleasures and profits, the sensual pleasure and the matter of money are the lowest and the least; and therefore although they may sometimes be used in friendship, and so not wholly excluded from the consideration of him that is to choose, yet of all things they are to be the least regarded. For there are, besides these, many profits and many pleasures; and because these only are sordid, all the other are noble and fair, and the expectations of them no disparagements to the best friendships. For, can any wise or good man be angry if I say, I choose this man to be my friend, because he is able to give me counsel, to restrain my wanderings, to comfort me in my sorrows; he is pleasant to me in private, and useful in public; he will

make my joys double, and divide my grief between himself and me? For what else should I choose? For being a fool, and useless? for a pretty face and a smooth chin? I confess it is possible to be a friend to one that is ignorant and pitiable, handsome and good for nothing, that eats well, and drinks deep, but he cannot be a friend to me; and I love him with a fondness or a pity, but it cannot be a noble friendship.

Plutarch calls such friendships, "the idols and images of friendship." True and brave friendships are between worthy persons; and there is in mankind no degree of worthiness, but is also a degree of usefulness, and by every thing by which a man is excellent, I may be profited: and because those are the bravest friends which can best serve the ends of friendships, either we must suppose that friendships are not the greatest comforts in the world, or else we must say, he chooses his friend best, that chooses such a one by whom he can receive the greatest comforts and assistances.

3. This being the measure of all friendships; they all partake of excellency, according as they are fitted to this measure: a friend may be counselled well enough, though his friend be not the wisest man in the world; and he may be pleased in his society, though he be not the best-natured man in the world; but still it must be, that something excellent is, or is apprehended, or else it can be no worthy friendship; because the choice is imprudent and foolish. Choose for your friend him that is wise and good, and secret and just, ingenuous and honest: and in those things which have a latitude, use your own liberty; but in such things which consist in an indivisible point, make no abatements; that is, you must not choose him to be your friend that is not honest and secret, just and true to a tittle; but if he be wise at all, and useful in any degree, and as good as you can have him, you need not be ashamed to own your friendships; though sometimes you may be ashamed of some imperfections of your friend.

4. But if you yet inquire further, whether fancy may be an ingredient in your choice? I answer, that fancy may minister to this as to all other actions, in which there is a liberty and variety; and we shall find that there may be peculiarities and little partialities, a friendship improperly so called, entering upon accounts of an innocent passion and a pleased fancy; even our blessed Saviour himself loved St John and Lazarus by a special love, which was signified by special treatments; and of the young man that spake well and wisely to Christ, it is affirmed, "Jesus loved him," that is, he fancied the man, and his soul had a certain cognation and similitude of temper and inclination. For in all things where there is a latitude, every faculty will endeavour to be pleased, and sometimes the meanest persons in a house have a festival: even sympathies and natural inclinations to some persons, and a conformity of humours and proportionable loves, and the beauty of the face, with a witty answer, may first strike the flint and kindle a spark, which, if it falls upon tender and compliant natures, may grow into flame; but this will never be maintained at the rate of friendship, unless it be fed by pure materials, by worthiness which are the food of friendship: where these are not, men and women may be pleased with one another's company, and lie under the same roof, and make themselves companions of equal prosperities, and humour their friend; but if you call this friendship, you give a sacred name to humour or fancy; for there is a Platonic friendship as well as a Platonic love; but they being but images of more noble bodies, are but like tinsel dressings, which will show bravely by candle-light, and do excel-

lently in a mask, but are not fit for conversation and the material intercourses of our life. These are the prettinesses of prosperity and good-natured wit; but when we speak of friendship, which is the best thing in the world (for it is love and beneficence, it is charity that is fitted for society), we cannot suppose a brave pile should be built up with nothing: and they that build castles in the air, and look upon friendship, as upon a fine romance, a thing that pleases the fancy, but is good for nothing else, will do well when they are asleep, or when they are come to Elysium; and for aught I know, in the mean time may be as much in love with Mandana in the Grand Cyrus, as with the infanta of Spain, or any of the most perfect beauties and real excellences of the world: and by dreaming of perfect and abstracted friendships, make them so immaterial that they perish in the handling and become good for nothing.

But I know not whither I was going; I did only mean to say that because friendship is that by which the world is most blessed and receives most good, it ought to be chosen amongst the worthiest persons, that is, amongst those that can do greatest benefit to each other; and though in equal worthiness I may choose by my eye, or ear, that is, into the consideration of the essential I may take in also the accidental and extrinsic worthinesses; yet I ought to give every one their just value; when the internal beauties are equal, these shall help to weigh down the scale, and I will love a worthy friend that can delight me as well as profit me, rather than him who cannot delight me at all, and profit me no more; but yet I will not weigh the gayest flowers, or the wings of butterflies, against wheat; but when I am to choose wheat, I may take that which looks the brightest. I had rather see thyme and roses, marjoram and July flowers, that are fair, sweet, and medicinal, than the prettiest tulips, that are good for nothing: and my sheep and kine are better servants than racehorses and greyhounds: and I shall rather furnish my study with Plutarch and Cicero, with Livy and Polybius, than with Cassandra and Ibrahim Bassa: and if I do give an hour to these for divertisement or pleasure, yet I will dwell with them that can instruct me, and make me wise and eloquent, severe and useful to myself and others. I end this with the saying of Lælius in Cicero: "Friendship ought not to follow utility, but utility friendship." When I choose my friend, I will not stay till I have received a kindness; but I will choose such a one that can do me many if I need them: but I mean such kindnesses which make me wiser, and which make me better; that is, I will, when I choose my friend, choose him that is the bravest, the worthiest, and the most excellent person: and then your first question is soon answered; To love such a person and to contract such friendships, is just so authorized by the principles of Christianity, as it is warranted to love wisdom and virtue, goodness and beneficence, and all the impresses of God upon the spirits of brave men.

2. The next inquiry is, how far it may extend? that is, by what expression it may be signified? I find that David and Jonathan loved at a strange rate; they were both good men; though it happened that Jonathan was on the obliging side; but here the expressions were, Jonathan watched for David's good; told him of his danger, and helped him to escape; took part with David's innocence against his father's malice and injustice; and beyond all this, did it to his own prejudice; and they two stood like two feet supporting one body: though Jonathan knew that David would prove like the foot of a wrestler, and would supplant him, not by any unworthy or unfriendly

action, but it was from God; and he gave him his hand to set him upon his own throne.

We find his parallels in the Gentile stories: young Athenodorus having divided the estate with his brother Xenon, divided it again when Xenon had spent his own share; and Lucullus would not take the consulship till his younger brother had first enjoyed it for a year; and you know who offered himself to death being pledge for his friend, and his friend by performing his word rescued him as bravely. And when we find in Scripture that 'for a good man some will even dare to die;' and that Aquila and Priscilla laid their necks down for St Paul; and the Galatians 'would have given him their very eyes,' that is, every thing that was most dear to them, and some others were near unto death for his sake: and that it is a precept of Christian charity, 'to lay down our lives for our brethren,' that is, those who were combined in a cause of religion, who were united with the same hopes, and imparted to each other ready assistances, and grew dear by common sufferings; we need inquire no further for the expressions of friendships. "Greater love than this hath no man, than that he lay down his life for his friends;" and this we are obliged to do in some cases for all Christians; and therefore we may do it for those who are to us, in this present and imperfect state of things, that which all the good men and women in the world shall be in heaven, that is, in the state of perfect friendships. This is the biggest; but then it includes and can suppose all the rest; and if this may be done for all, and in some cases must for any one of the multitude, we need not scruple whether we may do it for those who are better than a multitude. But as for the thing itself, it is not easily and lightly to be done; and a man must not die for humour, nor expend so great a jewel for a trifle. But we may not give our life to redeem another, unless, 1. The party for whom we die, be a worthy and a useful person; better for religion, and more useful to others than myself. Thus Ribischius the German died bravely, when he became a sacrifice for his master, Maurice duke of Saxony; covering his master's body with his own, that he might escape the fury of the Turkish soldiers. "I will help a dying person if I can," said Seneca; "but I will not die myself for him, unless by my death I save a brave man, or become the price of a great thing;" that is, I will die for a prince, for the republic, or to save an army, as David exposed himself to combat with the Philistine for the redemption of the host of Israel: and in this sense, that is true, "Better that one perish than a multitude." 2. A man dies bravely when he gives his temporal life to save the soul of any single person in the Christian world. It is a worthy exchange, and the glorification of that love by which Christ gave his life for every soul. Thus he that reproves an erring prince wisely and necessarily, he that affirms a fundamental truth, or stands up for the glory of the divine attributes, though he die for it, becomes a worthy sacrifice. 3. These are duty, but it may be heroic and full of Christian bravery, to give my life to rescue a noble and a brave friend, though I myself be as worthy a man as he; because the preference of him is an act of humility in me, and of friendship towards him; humility and charity making a pious difference, where art and nature have made all equal.

Some have fancied other measures of treating our friends. One sort of men say that we are to expect that our friends should value us as we value ourselves: which, if it were to be admitted, will require that we make no

friendships with a proud man; and so far indeed were well; but then this proportion does exclude some humble men who are most to be valued, and the rather because they undervalue themselves.

Others say, that a friend is to value his friend as much as his friend values him; but neither is this well or safe, wise or sufficient; for it makes friendship a mere bargain, and is something like the country weddings in some places where I have been; where the bridegroom and the bride must meet in the half way, and if they fail a step, they retire and break the match: it is not good to make a reckoning in friendship; that is merchandise, or it may be gratitude, but not noble friendship; in which each part strives to outdo the other in significations of an excellent love: and amongst true friends there is no fear of losing any thing.

But that which amongst the old philosophers comes nearest to the right, is, that we love our friends as we love ourselves. If they had meant it as our blessed Saviour did, of that general friendship by which we are to love all mankind, it had been perfect and well; or if they had meant it of the inward affection, or of outward justice; but because they meant it of the most excellent friendships, and of the outward significations of it, it cannot be sufficient: for a friend may and must sometimes do more for his friend than he would do for himself. Some men will perish before they will beg or petition for themselves to some certain persons; but they account it noble to do it for their friend, and they will want rather than their friend shall want; and they will be more earnest in praise or dispraise respectively for their friend than for themselves. And indeed I account that one of the greatest demonstrations of real friendship is, that a friend can really endeavour to have his friend advanced in honour, in reputation, in the opinion of wit or learning, before himself.

But then be pleased to think that therefore I so highly value this signification of friendship, because I so highly value humility. Humility and charity are the two greatest graces in the world; and these are the greatest ingredients, which constitute friendship and express it.

But there needs no other measures of friendship, but that it may be as great as you can express it; beyond death it cannot go, to death it may, when the cause is reasonable and just, charitable and religious: and yet if there be any thing greater than to suffer death (and pain and shame to some are more insufferable), a true and noble friendship shrinks not at the greatest trials.

And yet there is a limit even to friendship. It must be as great as our friend fairly needs in all things where we are not tied up by a former duty, to God, to ourselves, or some pre-obliging relative. When Pollux heard somebody whisper a reproach against his brother Castor, he killed the slanderer with his fist: that was a zeal which his friendship could not warrant. "No friendship can excuse a sin," said Cicero: and this the braver Romans instanced in the matter of duty to their country. It is not lawful to fight on our friend's part against our prince or country; and therefore when Caius Blossius of Cuma in the sedition of Gracchus, appeared against his country, when he was taken he answered, that he loved Tiberius Gracchus so dearly, that he thought fit to follow him whithersoever he led; and begged pardon upon that account: they who were his judges, were so noble, that though they knew it no fair excuse, yet for the honour of friendship they did not directly reject his motion; but put him to death because

he did not follow, but led on Gracchus, and brought his friend into the snare: for so they preserved the honours of friendship on either hand, by neither suffering it to be sullied by a foul excuse, nor yet rejected in any fair pretence. A man may not be perjured for his friend. I remember to have read, in the history of the Low Countries, that Grimston and Redhead, when Bergen-op-Zoon was besieged by the duke of Parma, acted for the interest of the queen of England's forces a notable design; but being suspected and put for their acquittance to take the sacrament of the altar, they dissembled their persons and their interest, their design and their religion, and did for the queen's service (as one wittily wrote to her) give not only their bodies but their souls, and so deserved a reward greater than she could pay them: I cannot say this is a thing greater than a friendship can require, for it is not great at all, but a great villany, which hath no name, and no order in worthy intercourses; and no obligation to a friend can reach as high as our duty to God: and he that does a base thing in zeal for his friend, burns the golden thread that ties their hearts together; it is a conspiracy, but no longer friendship. And when Cato lent his wife to Hortensius, and Socrates lent his to a merry Greek, they could not amongst wise persons obtain so much as the fame of being worthy friends; neither could those great names legitimate an unworthy action under the most plausible title.

It is certain that amongst friends their estates are common; that is, by whatsoever I can rescue my friend from calamity, I am to serve him or not to call him friend; there is a great latitude in this, and it is to be restrained by no prudence, but when there is on the other side a great necessity neither vicious nor avoidable: a man may choose whether he will or no; and he does not sin in not doing it, unless he have bound himself to it: but certainly friendship is the greatest band in the world, and if he have professed a great friendship, he hath a very great obligation to do that and more; and he can no ways be disobliged but by the care of his natural relations.

I said, 'friendship is the greatest band in the world;' and I had reason for it, for it is all the bands that this world hath; and there is no society, and there is no relation, that is worthy, but it is made so by the communications of friendship, and by partaking some of its excellences. For friendship is a transcendent, and signifies as much as unity can mean; and every consent, and every pleasure, and every benefit, and every society, is the mother or the daughter of friendship. Some friendships are made by nature, some by contract, some by interest, and some by souls. And in proportion to these ways of uniting, so the friendships are greater or less, virtuous or natural, profitable or holy, or all this together. Nature makes excellent friendships, of which we observe something in social plants; and growing better in each other's neighbourhood than where they stand singly: and in animals it is more notorious, whose friendships extend so far as to herd and dwell together, to play and feed, to defend and fight for one another, and to cry in absence, and to rejoice in one another's presence. But these friendships have other names less noble; they are sympathy, or they are instinct. But if to this natural friendship there be reason superadded, something will come in upon the stock of reason which will ennoble it; but because no rivers can rise higher than fountains, reason shall draw out all the dispositions which are in nature and establish them into friendships, but they cannot surmount the communications of nature: nature can make no

friendships greater than her own excellences. Nature is the way of contracting necessary friendships; that is, by nature such friendships are contracted, without which we cannot live, and be educated, or be well, or be at all.

In this scene, that of parents and children is the greatest, which, indeed, is begun in nature, but is actuated by society and mutual endearments. For parents love their children because they love themselves. Children being but like emissions of water, symbolical or indeed the same with the fountain; and they in their posterity see the images and instruments of a civil immortality: but if parents and children do not live together, we see their friendships and their loves are much abated, and supported only by fame and duty, by customs and religion, which to nature are but artificial pillars, and make this friendship to be complicated, and to pass from its own kind to another. That of children to their parents is not properly friendship, but gratitude, and interest, and religion; and whatever can supervene of the nature of friendship, comes in upon another account; upon society and worthiness and choice.

This relation on either hand makes great dearneesses: but it hath special and proper significations of it, and there is a special duty incumbent on each other respectively. This friendship and social relation are not equal, and there is too much authority on one side, and too much fear on the other, to make equal friendships; and, therefore, although this is one of the kinds of friendship, that is of a social and relative love and conversation; yet in the more proper use of the word friendship does do something which father and son do not; I instance in the free and open communicating counsels, and the evenness and pleasantness of conversation: and consequently the significations of the paternal and filial love, as they are divers in themselves and unequal, and therefore another kind of friendship than we mean in our inquiry; so they are such a duty which no other friendship can annul: because their mutual duty is bound upon them by religion long before any other friendships can be contracted; and therefore having first possession must abide for ever. The duty and love to parents must not yield to religion, much less to any new friendships: and our parents are to be preferred before the 'corban,' and are at no hand to be laid aside but when they engage against God: that is, in the rights which this relation and kind of friendship challenge as its propriety, it is supreme and cannot give place to any other friendships; till the father gives his right away, and God or the laws consent to it; as in the case of marriage, emancipation, and adoption to another family; in which cases though love and gratitude are still obliging, yet the societies and duties of relation are very much altered, which in the proper and best friendships can never be at all. But then this also is true, that the social relations of parents and children, not having in them all the capacities of a proper friendship, cannot challenge all the significations of it; that is, it is no prejudice to the duty I owe there, to pay all the dearneesses which are due here, and to friends there are some things due which the other cannot challenge, I mean my secret and my equal conversation, and the pleasures and interests of these, and the consequents of all.

Next to this is the society and dearness of brothers and sisters: which usually is very great amongst worthy persons; but if it be considered what it is in itself, it is but very little; there is very often a likeness of natural temper, and there is a social life under the same roof, and they are com-

manded to love one another, and they are equals in many instances, and are endeared by conversation when it is merry and pleasant, innocent and simple, without art and without design. But brothers pass not into noble friendships upon the stock of that relation: they have fair dispositions and advantages, and are more easy and ready to ferment into the greatest dear-nesses, if all things else be answerable. Nature disposes them well towards it; but in this inquiry, if we ask what duty is passed upon a brother to a brother even for being so,—I answer, that religion and our parents, and God and the laws, appoint what measures they please; but nature passes but very little, and friendship less; and this we see apparently in those brothers who live asunder, and contract new relations, and dwell in other societies. There is no love, no friendship without the intercourse of conversation; friendships indeed may last longer than our abode together, but they were first contracted by it, and established by pleasure and benefit; and unless it be the best kind of friendship (which that of brothers in that mere capacity is not), it dies when it wants the proper nutriment and support; and to this purpose is that which was spoken by Solomon;* “Better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother that is far off:” that is, although ordinarily brothers are first possessed of the entries and fancies of friendship, because they are of the first societies and conversations; yet when that ceases and the brother goes away, so that he does no advantage, no benefit of intercourse: the neighbour that dwells by me, with whom if I converse at all, either he is my enemy, and does and receives evil; or if we converse in worthinesses and benefit and pleasant communication, he is better in the laws and measures of friendship than my distant brother. And it is observable that ‘brother’ is indeed a word of friendship and charity, and of mutual endearment, and so is a title of the bravest society: yet in all the Scripture, there are no precepts given of any duty and comport, which brothers, that is, the descendants of the same parents, are to have one towards another in that capacity; and it is not because their nearness is such that they need none: for parents and children are nearer, and yet need tables of duty to be described; and for brothers, certainly they need it infinitely if there be any peculiar duty; Cain and Abel are the great probation of that. But the Scripture, which often describes the duty of parents and children, never describes the duty of brothers; except whereby brethren are meant all that part of mankind who are tied to us by any vicinity and endearment of religion, of country, of profession and family, of contract or society, of love and the noblest friendships; the meaning is, that though fraternity alone be the endearment of some degrees of friendship, without choice and without excellency; yet the relation itself is not friendship, and does not naturally infer it: and that which is procured by it, is but limited and little; and though it may pass into it, as other conversations may, yet the friendship is accidental to it, and enters upon other accounts, as it does between strangers; with this only difference, that brotherhood does oftentimes assist the valuation of those excellences, for which we entertain our friendships. Fraternity is the opportunity and preliminary disposition to friendship, and no more. For if my brother be a fool or a vicious person, the love to which nature and our first conversation dispose me, does not end in friendship, but in pity and fair provisions and assistances; which is

* Prov. xxvii. 10.

a demonstration that brotherhood is but the inclination and address to friendship. And though I will love a worthy brother more than a worthy stranger, if the worthiness be equal, because the relation is something, and being put into the scales against an equal worthiness, must needs turn the balance, as every grain will do in an even weight; yet when the relation is all the worthiness that is pretended, it cannot stand in competition with a friend: for though a friend-brother is better than a friend-stranger, where the friend is equal, but the brother is not; yet a brother is not better than a friend; but, as Solomon's expression is, "There is a friend that is better than a brother;" and to be born of the same parents is so accidental and extrinsic to a man's pleasure, or worthiness, or spiritual advantages, that though it be very pleasing and useful that a brother should be a friend, yet it is no great addition to a friend that he also is a brother: there is something in it, but not much. But in short, the case is thus: The first beginnings of friendship serve the necessities; but choice and worthiness are the excellences of its endearment and its bravery; and between a brother that is no friend, and a friend that is no brother, there is the same difference as between the disposition and the act or habit: a brother, if he be worthy, is the readiest and the nearest to be a friend; but till he be so, he is but the twilight of the day, and but the blossom of the fairest fruit of paradise. A brother does not always make a friend, but a friend ever makes a brother and more: and although nature sometimes finds the tree, yet friendship engraves the image; the first relation places him in the garden, but friendship sets it in the temple, and then only it is venerable and sacred: and so is brotherhood when it hath the soul of friendship.

One inquiry more there may be in this affair, and that is, whether a friend may be more than a husband or wife; to which I answer, that it can never be reasonable or just, prudent or lawful: but the reason is, because marriage is the queen of friendship, in which there is a communication of all that can be communicated by friendship: and it being made sacred by vows and love, by bodies and souls, by interest and custom, by religion and by laws, by common counsels and common fortunes; it is the principal in the kind of friendship, and the measure of all the rest: and there is no abatement to this consideration, but that there may be some allay in this as in other lesser friendships by the incapacity of the persons: if I have not chosen my friend wisely or fortunately, he cannot be the correlative in the best union; but then the friend lives as the soul does after death; it is in the state of separation, in which the soul strangely loves the body and longs to be reunited, but the body is a useless trunk, and can do no ministries to the soul; which therefore prays to have the body reformed and restored, and made a brave and fit companion; so must these best friends, when one is useless or unapt to the braveries of the princely friendship, they must love ever, and pray ever, and long till the other be perfected and made fit; in this case there wants only the body, but the soul is still a relative, and must be so for ever.

A husband and a wife are the best friends, but they cannot always signify all that to each other which their friendships would; as the sun shines not upon a valley, which sends up a thick vapour to cover his face; and though his beams are eternal, yet the emission is intercepted by the intervening cloud. But however, all friendships are but parts of this; "a man must

leave father and mother and cleave to his wife;" that is, 'the dearest thing in nature is not comparable to the dearest thing of friendship:' and I think this is argument sufficient to prove friendship to be the greatest band in the world; add to this, that other friendships are part of this, they are marriages too, less indeed than the other, because they cannot, must not, be all that endearment which the other is; yet that, being the principal, is the measure of the rest, and are all to be honoured by like dignities, and measured by the same rules, and conducted by their portion of the same laws. But as friendships are marriages of the soul, and of fortunes, and interests, and counsels; so they are brotherhoods too; and I often think of the excellences of friendships in the words of David, who certainly was the best friend in the world; "It is good and it is pleasant, that brethren should live like friends;" that is, they who are any ways relative, and who are any ways social and confederate, should also dwell in unity and loving society; for that is the meaning of the word *brother* in Scripture; "It was my brother Jonathan," said David; such brothers contracting such friendships are the beauties of society, and the pleasure of life, and the festivity of minds: and whatsoever can be spoken of love, which is God's eldest daughter, can be said of virtuous friendships; and though Carneades made an eloquent oration at Rome against justice, yet I never saw a panegyric of malice, or ever read that any man was witty against friendship. Indeed it is probable that some men, finding themselves, by the peculiarities of friendship, excluded from the participation of those beauties of society which enamel and adorn the wise and the virtuous, might suppose themselves to have reason to speak the evil words of envy and detraction; I wonder not: for all those unhappy souls which shall find heaven's gates shut against them, will think they have reason to murmur and blaspheme; the similitude is apt enough, for that is the region of friendship, and love is the light of that glorious country, but so bright that it needs no sun: here we have fine and bright rays of that celestial flame, and though to all mankind the light of it is in some measure to be extended,—like the treasures of light dwelling in the south, yet, a little, do illustrate and beautify the north—yet some live under the line, and the beams of friendship in that position are imminent and perpendicular.

I know but one thing more in which the communications of friendship can be restrained; and that is, in friends and enemies: "My friend's friend is not always my friend;" nor his enemy mine; for if my friend quarrel with a third person with whom he hath had no friendships, upon the account of interest; if that third person be my friend, the nobleness of our friendships despises such a quarrel; and what may be reasonable in him, would be ignoble in me; sometimes it may be otherwise, and friends may marry one another's loves and hatreds, but it is by chance if it can be just; and therefore because it is not always right, it cannot be ever necessary.

In all things else let friendships be as high and expressive till they become a union, or that friends, like the Molionidæ, be so, the same that the flames of their dead bodies make but one pyramid; no charity can be reprov'd, and such friendships, which are more than shadows, are nothing else but the rays of that glorious grace drawn into one centre, and made more active by the union; and the proper significations are well represented in the old hieroglyphic, by which the ancients depicted friendship; "In the beauties and strength of a young man, bare-headed, rudely clothed, to signify its activity, and lastingness, readiness of action, and aptnesses to do service: upon the

fringes of his garment was written '*mors et vita*,' as signifying that in life and death the friendship was the same: on the forehead was written '*summer and winter*,' that is, prosperous and adverse accidents and states of life: the left arm and shoulder were bare and naked down to the heart,—to which the finger pointed, and there was written '*longè et propè*:' " by all which we know that friendship does good far and near, in summer and winter, in life and death, and knows no difference of state or accident, but by the variety of her services: and therefore ask no more to what we can be obliged by friendship; for it is every thing that can be honest and prudent, useful and necessary.

For this is all the allay of this universality, we may do any thing or suffer any thing that is wise or necessary, or greatly beneficial to my friend; and that in any thing, in which I am perfect master of my person and fortunes. But I would not in bravery visit my friend when he is sick of the plague, unless I can do him good equal at least to my danger; but I will procure him physicians and prayers, all the assistances that he can receive, and that he can desire, if they be in my power: and when he is dead, I will not run into his grave and be stifled with his earth; but I will mourn for him, and perform his will, and take care of his relatives, and do for him as if he were alive. Of such immortal abstracted pure friendships indeed there is no great plenty, and to see brothers hate each other is not so rare as to see them love at this rate. The dead and the absent have but few friends, say the Spaniards; but they who are the same to their friend when he is in another country, or in another world, these are they who are fit to preserve the sacred fire for eternal sacrifices, and to perpetuate the memory of those exemplar friendships of the best men, which have filled the world with history and wonder: for in no other sense but this can it be true that friendships are pure loves, regarding to do good more than to receive it. He that is a friend after death, hopes not for a recompense from his friend, and makes no bargain either for fame or love; but is rewarded with the conscience and satisfaction of doing bravely: but then this is demonstration that they choose friends best, who take persons so worthy that can and will do so. This is the profit and usefulness of friendship; and he that contracts such a noble union, must take care that his friend be such who can and will; but hopes that himself shall be first used, and put to act it. I will not have such a friendship that is good for nothing, but I hope that I shall be on the giving and assisting part: and yet if both the friends be so noble, and hope and strive to do the benefit, I cannot well say which ought to yield,—and whether that friendship were braver that could be content to be unprosperous, so his friend might have the glory of assisting him;—or that which desires to give assistances in the greatest measures of friendship: but he that chooses a worthy friend that himself in the days of sorrow and need might receive the advantage, hath no excuse, no pardon, unless himself be as certain to do assistances, when evil fortune shall require them.

The last inquiry is, how friendships are to be conducted; that is, what are the duties in presence and in absence; whether the friend may not desire to enjoy his friend as well as his friendship? The answer to which in a great measure depends upon what I have said already: and if friendship be a charity in society, and is not for contemplation and noise, but for material comforts and noble treatments and usages, this is no per-adventure, but that if I buy land, I may eat the fruits, and if I take a house I

may dwell in it ; and if I love a worthy person, I may please myself in his society : and in this there is no exception, unless the friendship be between persons of a different sex: for then not only the interest of their religion, and the care of their honour, but the worthiness of their friendship, require that their intercourse be prudent, and free from suspicion and reproach. And if a friend is obliged to bear a calamity, so he secure the honour of his friend ; it will concern him to conduct his intercourse in the lines of a virtuous prudence, so that he shall rather lose much of his own comfort, than she anything of her honour; and in this case the noises of people are so to be regarded, that next to innocence they are the principal. But when, by caution, and prudence, and severe conduct, a friend hath done all that he or she can to secure fame and honourable reports; after this, their noises are to be despised : they must not fright us from our friendships, nor from her fairest intercourses; I may lawfully pluck the clusters from my own vine, though he that walks by, calls me thief.

But by the way, madam, you may see how much I differ from the morosity of those cynics, who would not admit your sex into the communities of a noble friendship. I believe some wives have been the best friends in the world; and few stories can outdo the nobleness and piety of that lady, that sucked the poisonous, purulent matter from the wound of our brave prince in the Holy Land, when an assassin had pierced him with a venom'd arrow. And if it be told that women cannot retain counsel, and therefore can be no brave friends ; I can best confute them by the story of Porcia, who, being fearful of the weakness of her sex, stabbed herself into the thigh to try how she could bear pain ; and finding herself constant enough to that sufferance, gently chid her Brutus for not daring to trust her, since now she perceived that no torment could wrest that secret from her, which she hoped might be intrusted to her. If there were not more things to be said for your satisfaction, I could have made it disputable whether have been more illustrious in their friendships, men or women ? I cannot say that women are capable of all those excellences, by which men can oblige the world; and therefore a female friend in some case is not so good a counsellor as a wise man, and cannot so well defend my honour ; nor dispose of reliefs and assistances, if she be under the power of another ; but a woman can love as passionately, and converse as pleasantly, and retain a secret as faithfully, and be useful in her proper ministries ; and she can die for her friend as well as the bravest Roman knight ; and we find that some persons have engaged themselves as far as death upon a less interest than all this amounts to : such were the Devoti of a prince or general ; the Assassins amongst the Saracens; the Soldurii amongst the old Gauls : they did as much as a friend could do. And if the greatest services of a friend can be paid for by any ignoble price, we cannot grudge to virtuous and brave women that they be partners in a noble friendship, since their conversation and returns can add so many moments to the felicity of our lives : and therefore though a knife cannot enter as far as a sword, yet a knife may be more useful to some purposes, and in every thing, except it be against an enemy. A man is the best friend in trouble, but a woman may be equal to him in the days of joy : a woman can as well increase our comforts, but cannot so well lessen our sorrows : and therefore we do not carry women with us when we go to fight; but, in peaceful cities and times, virtuous women are the beauties of society and the prettinesses of friendship. And when we

consider that few persons in the world have all those excellences by which friendship can be useful and illustrious, we may as well allow women as men to be friends; since they can have all that which can be necessary and essential to friendships, and these cannot have all by which friendships can be accidentally improved; in all, some abatements will be made; and we shall do too much honour to women if we reject them from friendships because they are not perfect: for if to friendships we admit imperfect men, because no man is perfect; he that rejects women, does find fault with them because they are not more perfect than men; which either does secretly affirm that they ought and can be perfect, or else it openly accuses men of injustice and partiality.

I hope you will pardon me that I am a little gone from my undertaking: I went aside to wait upon the women and to do countenance to their tender virtues: I am now returned, and if I were to do the office of a guide to uninstructed friends, would add the particulars following. Madam, you need not read them now, but when any friends come to be taught by your precept and example how to converse in the noblest conjurations, you may put these into better words and tell them,

1. That the first law of friendship is, they must neither ask of their friend what is indecent; nor grant it if themselves be asked. For it is no good office to make my friend more vicious or more a fool; I will restrain his folly, but not nurse it; I will not make my groom the officer of my lust and vanity. There are villains who sell their souls for bread, that offer sin and vanity at a price: I should be unwilling my friend should know I am vicious; but if he could be brought to minister to it, he is not worthy to be my friend: and if I could offer it to him, I do not deserve to clasp hands with a virtuous person.

2. Let no man choose him for his friend whom it shall be possible for him ever after to hate; for though the society may justly be interrupted, yet love is an immortal thing, and I will never despise him whom I could once think worthy of my love. A friend that proves not good, is rather to be suffered, than any enmities be entertained: and there are some outer offices of friendship and little drudgeries, in which the less worthy are to be employed, and it is better that he be below stairs than quite thrown out of doors.

3. There are two things which a friend can never pardon, a treacherous blow and the revealing of a secret, because these are against the nature of friendship; they are the adulteries of it, and dissolve the union; and in the matters of friendship, which is the marriage of souls, these are the proper causes of divorce: and therefore I shall add this only, that secrecy is the chastity of friendship, and the publication of it is a prostitution and direct debauchery; but a secret, treacherous wound is a perfect and unpardonable apostasy. I remember a pretty apologue that Bromiard tells:—A fowler in a sharp frosty morning having taken many little birds for which he had long watched, began to take up his nets; and nipping the birds on the head laid them down. A young thrush, espying the tears trickling down his cheeks by reason of the extreme cold, said to her mother, that certainly the man was very merciful and compassionate that wept so bitterly over the calamity of the poor birds: but her mother told her more wisely, that she might better judge of the man's disposition by his hand than by his eye;—and if the hands do strike treacherously, he can never be admitted to

friendship, who speaks fairly and weeps pitifully. Friendship is the greatest honesty and ingenuity in the world.

4. Never accuse thy friend, nor believe him that does; if thou dost, thou hast broken the skin: but he that is angry with every little fault, breaks the bones of friendship. And when we consider that in society and the accidents of every day, in which no man is constantly pleased or displeased with the same things, we shall find reason to impute the change unto ourselves; and the emanations of the sun are still glorious, when our eyes are sore: and we have no reason to be angry with an eternal light, because we have a changeable and a mortal faculty. But however, do not think thou didst contract alliance with an angel, when thou didst take thy friend into thy bosom; he may be weak as well as thou art, and thou mayest need pardon as well as he; and that man loves flattery more than friendship, who would not only have his friend, but all the contingencies of his friend, to humour him.

5. Give thy friend counsel wisely and charitably, but leave him to his liberty whether he will follow thee or no: and be not angry if thy counsel be rejected: for advice is no empire, and he is not my friend that will be my judge whether I will or no. Neoptolemus had never been honoured with the victory and spoils of Troy, if he had attended to the tears and counsel of Lycomedes, who, being afraid to venture the young man, fain would have had him sleep at home safe in his little island. He that gives advice to his friend and exacts obedience to it, does not the kindness and ingenuity of a friend, but the office and pertness of a schoolmaster.

6. Never be a judge between thy friends in any matter where both set their hearts upon the victory: if strangers or enemies be litigants, whatever side thou favourest, thou gettest a friend; but when friends are the parties thou lovest one.

7. Never comport thyself so, as that my friend can be afraid of thee: for then the state of the relation alters when a new and troublesome passion supervenes. "Perfect love casteth out fear;" and no man is friend to a tyrant; but that friendship is tyranny where the love is changed into fear, equality into empire, society into obedience; for then all my kindness to him also will be no better than flattery.

8. When you admonish your friend, let it be without bitterness; when you chide him, let it be without reproach; when you praise him, let it be with worthy purposes, and for just causes, and in friendly measures; too much of that is flattery, too little is envy: if you do it justly, you teach him true measures; but when others praise him, rejoice, though they praise not thee, and remember that if thou esteemest his praise to be thy disparagement, thou art envious, but neither just nor kind.

9. When all things else are equal prefer an old friend before a new. If thou meanest to spend thy friend, and make gain of him till he be weary, thou wilt esteem him as a beast of burden, the worse for his age: but if thou esteemest him by noble measures, he will be better to thee by thy being used to him, by trial and experience, by reciprocation of endearments, and an habitual worthiness. An old friend is like old wine, which when a man hath drunk, he doth not desire new, because he saith "the old is the better." But every old friend was new once; and if he be worthy, keep the new one till he become old.

10. After all this, treat thy friend nobly, love to be with him, do to him

all the worthinesses of love and fair endearment, according to thy capacity and his; bear with his infirmities till they approach towards being criminal; but never dissemble with him, never despise him, never leave him. Give him gifts and upbraid him not, and refuse not his kindnesses, and be sure never to despise the smallness or the impropriety of them. "A gift (saith Solomon) fasteneth friendships." For as an eye that dwells long upon a star, must be refreshed with lesser beauties and strengthened with greens and looking-glasses, lest the sight becomes amazed with too great a splendour; so must the love of friends sometimes be refreshed with material and low caresses; lest by striving to be too divine it become less human: it must be allowed its share of both: it is human in giving pardon and fair construction, and openness and ingenuity, and keeping secrets; it hath something that is divine, because it is beneficent; but much because it is eternal.

AN ACCUSING CONSCIENCE.

THE accusation and watchfulness, and vocal, clamorous guards of conscience, are in perpetual attendance, and though they may sleep, yet they are quickly awakened, and make the evil man restless. "They that live unjustly," says Seneca, "always live miserably and fearfully; because although their crime be secret, yet they cannot be confident that it shall be so:" meaning, that because their conscience does accuse them, they perceive they are discovered, and pervious to an eye, which what effect it will have in the publication of the crime here and hereafter is not matter of knowledge, but cannot choose but be matter of fear for ever. If any chance makes the fact private, yet no providence or watchfulness can give security, because within there dwells a principle of fear that can never die, till repentance kills it. And therefore Chilo in Laetius said upon this account, that 'loss is rather to be chosen than filthy gain; because that loss brings sorrow but once, but injustice brings a perpetual fear and pain. The wife that lies by his side, knows not at what the guilty man looks pale, but something that is within the bosom knows; and no pompousness of condition can secure the man, and no witty cruelty can equal the torment. For that also, although it be not directly the office of conscience, yet it is the act and effect of conscience; when itself is injured, it will never let anything else be quiet.

The binding to duty is so an effect of conscience, that it cannot be separated from it; but the binding to punishment is an act of conscience also as it is a judge, and is intended to affright a sinner, and to punish him: but it is such a punishment as is the beginning of hell-torments, and unless the wound be cured, will never end till eternity itself shall go into a grave. The same day that a man sins, on the same day he is condemned; and when Menelaus in the tragedy did ask, what disease killed poor Orestes? he was answered, his disease was nothing but an evil conscience; he had done vile things, and had an amazed spirit that distracted him, and so he died. Virgil calls the wounds of an evil conscience, 'revenging cares,'—and the being pained with it is called 'to be choked or strangled' with an evil con-

science, by St Chrysostom, who in his twenty-second homily upon the first epistle to the Corinthians, speaks much and excellently to the same purpose: and there are some that fancy this was the cause of Judas' death; the horrors of his conscience were such, that his spirits were confounded, and restless, and uneasy; and striving to go from their prison, stopped at the gates of emanation, and stifled him. It did that, or as bad; it either choked him or brought him to a halter, as it hath done many besides him. And although I may truly say, no tongue is able to express the evils which are felt by a troubled conscience, or a wounded spirit; yet the heads of them are visible and notorious to all men.

1. The first is that which Nazianzen calls 'accusations and vexings of a man when he is in misery:' then when he needs most comfort, he shall by his evil conscience be most disquieted. A sickness awakes a dull sleeping conscience, and when it is awakened it will make that the man shall not sleep. So Antiochus, when his lieutenant Lysias was beaten by the Jews, fell sick with grief, and then his conscience upbraided him; "but now," said he, "I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem; 'because those evils now have found me out.'" For when a man is prosperous, it is easy for him to stop the mouth of conscience, to bribe it or abuse it, to fill it with noise, and to divert it with business, to outvie it with temporal gayeties, or to be flattered into weak opinions and sentences: but when a man is smitten of God, and divested of all the outsides and hypocrisies of sin, and that conscience is disentangled from its fetters and foolish pretensions, then it speaks its own sense, it ever speaks loudest when the man is poor, or sick, or miserable. "A man is sometimes so surprised with the false fires and glaring of temptation, that he cannot see the secret turpitude and deformity. But when the cloud and vail are off, then comes the tormentor from within:" Then the calamity swells, and conscience increases the trouble, when God sends war, or sickness, or death. It was Saul's case: when he lost that fatal battle in which the ark was taken, he called to the Amalekite, "fall upon me and slay me; I am in a great strait."—He was indeed; for his son was slain, and his army routed, and his enemies were round about: but then conscience stepped in, and told him of the evil that he had done in causing fourscore of the Lord's priests to be slain; and therefore Abulensis reads the words thus, "Fall upon me and slay me, I am entangled in the fringes of the priests' garments."—"He thought he saw the priests of the Lord accusing him before God."—And this hath been an old opinion of the world, that, in the days of their calamity, wicked persons are accused by those whom they have injured. Not much unlike to which is that of Plato, describing the torments of wicked souls: "They roar and cry out; some calling on them whom they killed, some on those they have calumniated; and calling, they pray them whom they have injured to give them pardon." Then every bush is a wild beast, and every shadow is a ghost, and every glow-worm is a dead man's candle, and every lantern is a spirit. When Nero was distressed, he saw his mother's taper, and grew pale with it.

2. The second effect is shame, which conscience never fails to inflict secretly, there being a secret turpitude and baseness in sin, which cannot be better expressed than by its opposition and contradiction to conscience. Conscience when it is 'right, makes a man bold; "he that walks honestly, walks confidently," because he hath innocence and he hath reason on his side. But he that sins, sins against reason, in which the honour and the nobleness

of a man consist; and therefore shame must needs come in the destitution of them. For as by reason men naturally rule, so when they are fallen from it, unless by some accidental courages they be supported, they fall into the state of slaves and sneaking people. And upon this account it was that Plato said, "if I were sure God would pardon me, and men would not know my sin, yet I should be ashamed to sin, because of its essential baseness."—The mistresses of our vile affections are so ugly we cannot endure to kiss them but through a veil, either the veil of excuse, or pretence, or darkness; something to hide their ugliness; and yet even these also are so thin that the filthiness and shame are not hid. An evil conscience is ashamed of light, and afraid of darkness; and therefore nothing can secure it. But being ashamed before judges, and assemblies, it flies from them into solitudes; and when it is there, the shame is changed into fear, and therefore from thence it runs abroad into societies of merry criminals, and drinking sanctuaries; which is nothing but a shutting the eyes, and hiding the head, while the body is exposed to a more certain danger. It cannot be avoided: it was, and is, and will eternally be true, "the things whereof ye are now ashamed; the end of those things is death."^{*} Death is the punishment which God inflicts, and shame is that which comes from man.

3. There is another effect which cannot be well told by him that feels it, or by him that sees it, what it is: because it is a thing without limit and without order. It is a distraction of mind, indeterminate, divided thoughts, flying every thing, and pursuing nothing. It was the case of Nebuchadnezzar; 'his thoughts troubled him' like the sophisters who in their pursuit of vain-glory displeased the people, and were hissed from their pulpits; nothing could amaze them more; they were troubled like men of a disturbed conscience. The reason is, they are fallen into an evil condition, which they did not expect; they are abused in their hopes, they are fallen into a sad state of things, but they know not what it is, nor where they are, nor whither it will bear them, nor how to get out of it. This indeed is commonly the first part of the great evil; shame goes along with the sin, in the very acting it, but as soon as it is acted, then begins this confusion; they thought of nothing but pleasure before; but as soon as they have finished, then they begin to taste the wormwood and the coloquintida. While they were doing it, they thought it little, or they thought it none, because their fancy and their passion ruled; but when that is satisfied and burst with a filthy pleasure, then they understand how great their sin is, but are distracted in their thoughts, for they understand not how great their calamity shall be. The secret tormentor shakes the mind, and dissolves it into indiscrimination and confusion. The man is like one in a lie, or surprised in a shameful act of lust, or theft; at first he knows not what to say, or think, or do, and his spirits huddle together, and fain would go somewhere, but they know not whither, and do something, but they know not what.

This confusion and first amazement of the conscience in some vile natures, and baser persons, proceeds to impudence, and hardness of face. When they are discovered they rub their foreheads hard, and consider it cannot be worse, and therefore in their way they make the best of it; that is, they will not submit to the judgment of conscience, nor suffer her infliction, but take the fortune of the banditti, or of an outlaw, rather than by

* Rom. vi. 24.

the rule of subjects suffer the penalty of the law, and the severity of the judge. But conscience hath no hand in this, and whatsoever of this nature happens, it is in despite of conscience; and if it proceeds upon that method, it goes on to obstinacy, hardness of heart, a resolution never to repent, a hatred of God, and reprobation. For if conscience be permitted to do its work, this confusion when it comes to be stated, and that the man hath time to consider it, passes on to fear; and that is properly the next effect.

4. An evil or a guilty conscience is disposed for fear; shame and fear cannot be far asunder. Sin makes us ashamed before men, and afraid of God; an evil conscience makes man a coward, timorous as a child in a church-porch at midnight; it makes the strongest men to tremble like the keepers of the house of an old man's tabernacle. Menander has remarked, that "No strength of body, no confidence of spirit, is a defensive against an evil conscience, which will intimidate the courage of the most perfect warrior." Thus, too, Claudian describes the state of tyrants and injurious persons; 'they do evil and fear worse, they oppress brave men, and are afraid of mean fellows; they are encompassed with swords, and dwell amongst poisons, they have towers with back-doors and many outlets; and they threaten much, but themselves are most afraid.' We read of Belshazzar, his knees beat against each other upon the arrest made on him by the hand on the wall, which wrote the sentence of God in a strange character, because he would not read the writing in his conscience. This fear is very great and very lasting, even in this world: and is rarely well described by the author of the Wisdom of Solomon. 'That is the ground of their misery; "The souls were refractory to discipline, and have erred. They oppress the holy nation."—The effect was, "they became prisoners of darkness, and fettered with the bands of a long night; 'they became outlaws from the divine providence. And while they supposed to lie hid in their secret sins, they were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness: 'they did fear horribly, and were disturbed with a wonderful amazement.' For neither might the corner that held them, keep them from fear, but a sound descending did trouble them; 'sad apparitions did affright them: 'a fire appeared to them very formidable; they were affrighted with the apprehensions of what they saw not: 'and all the way in that excellent description, there is nothing but fear and affrightment, horrid amazement and confusion; 'full of fear, and they perished trembling;' and then follow the philosophy and rational account of all this. "When their conscience reproves them, they are possessed with fearful expectations." For wickedness condemned by her own witness is very timorous: "Conscience gives witness and gives sentence: and when wickedness is condemned, it is full of affrightment." For fear is the ally of confidence and presumption, and the promoter of its own apprehensions, and betrays the succours that reason yields. For indeed in this case, no reason can dispute a man out of his misery, for there is nothing left to comfort the conscience, so long as it is divested of its innocence. The prophet Jeremy instances this in the case of Pashur, who oppressed the prophets of the Lord, putting them in prison, and forbidding them to preach in the name of the Lord: "thy name shall be no more called 'Pashur,' but 'Magor Missabib,' 'that is, fear round about;' for I will make thee a terror unto thyself."

This fear of its own nature is apt to increase: for indeed it may be infinite. He that fears in this case, knows not the greatness and measure of the

evil which he fears; it may arrive to infinite, and it may be any thing, and it may be every thing :—and therefore there is,

5. An appendant perpetuity and restlessness; a man of an evil conscience is never at quiet. He is put to so many shifts to excuse his crime before men, and cannot excuse it to God or to himself, and then he is forced to use arts of forgetfulness, that he may not remember his sorrow; he runs to weakness for excuse, and to sin for a comfort, and to the methods and paths of hell for sanctuary, and rolls himself in his uneasy chains of fire, and changes from side to side upon his gridiron, till the flesh drop from the bones on every side. This is the poet's vulture; "It gnaws perpetually, and consumes not, being like the fire of hell, it does never devour, but torments for ever."

6. This fear and torment, which are inflicted by conscience, do not only increase at our death, but after death is the beginning of hell. For these are the fire of hell; "I am tormented in this flame;" so said Dives, when he was in torments. This is a part of hell-fire, the smoke of it ascends night and day; and it is a preparatory to the horrible sentence of doomsday, as the being tormented in prison is, to the day of condemnation and execution. The conscience in the state of separation does accuse perpetually, and with an insupportable amazement fears the revelation of the day of the Lord. "The fury within will compel him to confess," and then he is prepared for the horrible sentence; as they who upon the rack accuse themselves, and then they are carried to execution. Menippus, in Lucian, says that the souls of them that are dead, are accused by the shadows of their bodies: and these he says are "worthy of belief," because they are always present, and never parted from their bodies; meaning that a man's conscience, which is inseparable as a shadow, is a strong accuser and a perfect witness: and this will never leave them till it carries them to hell; and then the fear is changed into despair, and indignation, and hatred of God, and eternal blasphemy.

ON THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN.

LET every man that thinks of his return, be infinitely careful to avoid every new sin; for it is like a blow to a broken leg, or a burden to a crushed arm. Every little thing disorders the new health, and unfinished recovery. So that every new sin to such a person is a double damage, it pulls him back from all his hopes, and makes his labours vain; and he is as far to seek, and as much to begin again as ever, and more. For so may you see one climbing of a rock, with a great contention and labour and danger, if when he hath got from the foot to the shoulder, he then lets his hold go, he falls lower than where he first set his foot, and sinks deeper by the weight of his own fall. So is the new converted man who is labouring to overcome the rocks and mountains of his habitual sins; every sin throws him down farther, and bruises his very bones in the fall. To this purpose therefore is the wise advice of the son of Sirach; "Hast thou sinned? do so no more, but ask pardon for thy former fault: add not sin to sin, for in one a man shall not be unpunished." Let not blood touch blood, nor sin touch sin; for we destroy our souls with impious hands, when a crime follows a habit, like funeral processions in the pomps and solemnities of death.

At the beginning of his recovery, let the penitent be armed by special cautions against the labours and difficulties of the restitution: and consider, that if sin be so pleasant, it is the habit that hath made it so; it is become easy and natural by the custom. And therefore so may virtue. And complain not that nature helps and corroborates the habits of sin: for besides that nature doth this mischief but in some instances, not in all; the grace of God will as much assist the customs and labours of virtue, as nature doth the habits of vice. And choose whether you will; take any institution or course of life, let it at first be never so violent, use will make it pleasant. And therefore we may make virtue as certain as vice is, as pleasing to the spirit, as hard to be removed, as perfective of our nature as the other is destructive; and make it by assuefaction as impossible to be vicious, as we now think it difficult and impossible to overcome flesh and blood. But let him remember this also, that it will be a strange shame, that he can be in a state of sin and death, from which it will be very hard to remove, and to confess our nature so caitiff and base, that we cannot as easily be united unto virtue, that he can become a devil, and cannot be like an angel; that he can decline to the brutishness of beasts, and yet never arise up to a participation of the excellent beauties of the intellectual world.

He that undertakes the repentance of his vicious habits, when he hath strength and time enough for the work, must do it in kind; that is, he must oppose a habit to a habit, every contrary to its contrary: as chastity to his wantonness, temperance to his gluttony or drunkenness: the reason is, because if he had contracted the habit of a sin, especially of youthful sins, unless the habit of virtue be opposed to the instance of his sin, he cannot be safe, nor penitent. For while the temptation and fierce inclinations remain, it cannot be a cure to this to do acts of charity; he must do acts of chastity, or else he will fall or continue in his uncleanness; which in old persons will not be. Here the sin still tempts by natural inclination, and commands by the habit; and therefore as there can be no repentance while the affections remain, so neither can there be safety as long as the habit hath a natural being. The first begins with a moral revocation of the sin; and the same hath also its progression, perfection, and security, by the extinction of the inherent quality.

Let the penitent seek to obstruct or divert the proper principles of evil habits; for by the same by which they begin, commonly by the same they are nursed up to their ugly bulk. There are many of them that attend upon the prince of darkness, and minister to the filthy production. Evil examples, natural inclinations, false propositions, evil prejudices, indulgence to our own infirmities, and many more: but especially, a colabitation with the temptation, by which we fell and did enter into death, and by which we use to fall. There are some men more in love with the temptation than the sin; and because this rushes against the conscience rudely, and they see death stand at the end of the progression, therefore they only love to stand upon Mount Ebal and view it. They resolve they will not commit the sin, they will not be overcome, but they would fain be tempted. If these men will but observe the contingencies of their own state, they shall find that when they have set the house on fire, they cannot prescribe its measures of burning. But there is secret iniquity in it.—For he that loves to stand and stare upon the fire that burnt him formerly, is pleased with the warmth and splendour, and the temptation itself hath some little correspondence to the ap-

petite.—The man dares not fornicate, but loves to look upon the beauties of a woman, or sit with her at the wine, till his heart is ready to drop asleep. He will not enter into the house, because it is infected with the plague, but he loves to stand at the door, and fain would enter if he durst;—it is impossible that any man should love to abide by a temptation for a good end.—There is some little sensuality in being tempted :—and the very consideration concerning it, sometimes strikes the fancy too unluckily, and pleases some faculty or other, as much as the man dares admit. I do not say, that to be tempted is always criminal, or in the neighbourhood of it: but it is the best indication of our love to God, for his sake to deny its importunity, and to overcome it: but that is only, when it is unavoidable and from without, against our wills, or at least besides our purposes. For in the declination of sin, and overcoming temptation, there can be but these two things by which we can signify our love to God. 1. To stand in a temptation when we could not avoid it. 2. And to run from it, when we can. This hath in it more of prudence, and the other of force and spiritual strength: and we can best signify the sense of our weakness, and our carefulness by avoiding the occasions; but then we declare the excellency of our purposes, and pertinacious love to God, when we serve him in hard battles, when we are tempted as before, but fall not now as we did then. Indeed this is the greatest trial; and when God suffers us so to be tried, we are accepted if we stand in that day, and in such circumstances. But he that will choose that state, and dwell near his danger, loves not to be safe; and either he is a vain person in the confidence of his own strength, or else he loves that which is like a sin, and comes as near it as he dare; and very often, the event of it is, at last he dies like a fly about a candle. But he that hath fallen by such a neighbourhood, and still continues the cause, may as well hope to cure his fever by full draughts of the new vintage, as return to life upon that account.—A vicious habit is maintained at an easy rate, but not cured without a mighty labour and expense: any thing can feed it, but nothing can destroy it, if there be any thing near it, whereby it can be kept alive.—If therefore you will cure a vicious habit, dwell far from danger, and tempt not death, with which you have been so long in love.

A vicious habit never could have come to that state and period but by impunity. If God had smitten the sinner graciously in the beginning of his evil journey, it is likely that as Balaam did, he also would have offered to go back. Now when God does not punish a sinner early, though it hath in it more of danger and less of safety, yet we may in some measure supply the want of divine mercy smiting and hindering a sinner, by considering that impunity is no mark of innocence, but very often it is an indication of God's extremest and final anger. Therefore be sure, ever to suspect a prosperous sin. For of itself prosperity is a temptation, and it is granted but to few persons to be prosperous and pious. The poor and the despised, the humble and necessitous; he that daily needs God with a sharpness of apprehension, that feeds upon necessity, and lives in hardships, that is never flattered, and is never cheated out of virtue for bread, those persons are likely to be wise and wary; and if they be not, nothing can make them so: for he that is impatient in want, is impotent in plenty; for impatience is pride, and he that is proud when he is poor, if he were rich he would be intolerable; and therefore it is easier to bear poverty temperately than riches. Poverty is like a girdle about our loins; it binds hard, but it is

modest and useful. But a heap of riches is a heap of temptations, and few men will escape, if it be always in their hand what can be offered to their heart. And therefore to be prosperous hath in itself enough of danger. But when a sin is prosperous and unpunished, there are left but few possibilities and arguments of resistance, and therefore it will become or remain habitual respectively. Whenever you see a sin thrive, start back suddenly and with a trembling fear: for it does nurse the sin from a single action to a filthy habit, and that always dwells in the suburbs of the horrible regions. No man is so much to be pitied, as he that thrives and is let alone in his sin: there is evil towards that man. But then God is kind to a sinner, when he makes his sin to be uneasy, and troublesome.

But in prosecution of the former observation, it is of very great use that the vigorous and healthful penitent do use corporal mortifications and austerities, by way of penance and affliction for every single act of that sin he commits, whose habit he intends to mortify. If he makes himself smart, and never spare his sin but still punish it, besides that it is a good act of indignation and revenge which St Paul commends in all holy penitents, it is also a way to take off the pleasure of the sin, by which it would fain make abode and seizure upon the will. A man will not so soon delight or love to abide with that which brings him affliction in present, and makes his life miserable. This advice I learn from Maimonides: "Nothing so good to cure an evil custom of sinning, as the inflicting great smart upon the offender."—He that is going to cure his habitual drunkenness; if ever he be overtaken again, let him for the first offence fast two days with bread and water; and the next time double his smart; and let the man load himself till he groans under it, and he will be glad to take heed.

He that hath sinned often, and is now returning, let him watch if ever his sin be offered to him by a temptation, and that temptation dressed as formerly; that he be sure not to neglect that opportunity of beginning to break his evil habit; he that hath committed fornication, and repents, if ever he be tempted again not to seek for it, but to act it, and may enter upon the sin with ease and readiness, then let him refuse his sin so dressed, so ready, so fitted for action, and the event will be this, that besides it is a great indication and sign of an excellent repentance, it discountenances the habit, and breaks the combination of its parts, and disturbs its dwelling; but besides it is so signal an action of repentance, and so pleasing to the Spirit of God, and of a good man, that it is apt to make him do so again, and proceed to crucify that habit, upon which he hath had so lucky a day, and so great a victory and success. It is like giving to a person, and obliging him by some very great favour. He that does so, is for ever after ready and apt to do that obliged person still more kindness, lest the first should perish. When a man hath gotten an estate together, he is apt, saith Plutarch, to save little things, and be provident even of the smallest sum, because that now, if it be saved, will come to something, it will be seen and preserved in his heap. But he that is poor, cannot become rich with those little arts of providence; and therefore he lets them go to his pleasure, since he cannot keep them with hopes to improve his bank: so is such an earnest and entry into piety; it is such a stock of holiness, that it is worth preserving; and to have resisted once so bravely, does add confidence to the spirit that it can overcome, and makes it probable that he may get a crown. However it falls out, it is an excellent act and signification of a hearty re-

penitance and conversion. 'He is a just man, not whosoever does no wrong, but he that can and will not.' Maimonides saith excellently to the same purpose. For to the question, "When may repentance be accounted perfect?" he answers, "This is the true and perfect repentance, when the power and opportunity are present, and the temptation, it may be, ready and urging, when it is in a man's hand to do the same thing, yet retiring he commits it not, only for piety or repentance' sake, not being restrained by fear or want of powers."

If such opportunities of his sin be not presented, it is never the worse: the penitent need not be fond of them, for they are dangers, which prove death, if they be not triumphed over: and if they be, yet the man hath escaped a danger, and may both prove and act his repentance without it. But therefore he that is not so tried and put to it, must do all that which he is put to, and execute his fierce anger against the sin, and by proper instances of mortification endeavour the destruction of it; and although every man hath not so glorious a trial and indication of his repentance as in the former instance, yet he that denies himself in any instance of his sin, and so in all that he can or is tempted in, does the same thing; all the same duty, and with less danger, and with less gloriousness. But if it happen that his sin urge him not at all as formerly, or the occasion is gone, and the matter is subtracted, he is to follow the measures of old men described in the next section.

Let the penitent be infinitely careful that he does not mortify one vicious habit by a contrary vice, but by a contrary virtue. For to what purpose is it that you are cured of prodigality, and then die by covetousness? It is not this or that alone that is contrary to God. Every vicious habit is equally his enemy; and he that exterminates one vice and entertains another, hath destroyed the vice, but not the viciousness; he hath quitted the instance, but not the irregularity; he hath served the interest of his fortune or his pleasure, his fame or his quiet, his passion or his humour, but not his virtue and relations to God. By changing his vice for another, he is convinced of his first danger, but enters not into safety; he is only weary of his fever, and changes it into the ease of a dead palsy; and it is in them as in all sharp sicknesses, that is always the worst that is actually upon him; and the man dies by his imaginary cure, but real sickness.

When the mortification of a vicious habit is attempted, and is found difficult and pertinacious, not flexible or malleable by the strokes of contrition and its proper remedies, it is a safe way if the penitent will take some course to disable the sin, and make it impossible to return in the former instance, provided it be done by a lawful instrument. Origen took an ill course to do it, but resolved he would mortify his lust, and make himself a eunuch. But a solemn vow were an excellent instrument to restrain the violences of a frequent temptation, if the person were to be trusted with it; that is, if he were a constant person, not giddy nor easy to revolt, but of a pertinacious nature, or of so tender conscience, that he durst not for the world break his vow. But this remedy is dangerous where the temptations return strongly. But there are some others which are safer. Cut off the occasion wholly. Defy the concubine publicly, and disgrace her, make it impossible for her to consent to thee if thou shouldest ask her. If thy lord or master tempts thee to drunkenness, quit his service or openly deny him. Make thy face unpleasant, and tear off the charms from thy beauty, that thou mayest not

be courted any more. This is a fierceness and zeal of repentance, but very fit to be used when milder courses will not cure thee. If thou repentest truly, pluck up sin by the roots, take away its principle, strangle its nurse, and destroy every thing that can foment it.

It was not well with thee when thou didst first enter into the suburbs of hell by single actions of sin; but they were transient, and passed off sooner than the habit: but when this did supervene, a man's acts of malice were enlarged and made continual to each other; that is, joined by a common term of affection and delight in sin, and perfect subjection to its accursed empire. But now in thy return consider proportionably concerning thy actions of repentance and piety, whether they be transient or permanent. Good men often say their prayers, and choose good forms, and offices, the best they can, and they use them with an earnest and an actual devotion; but he that hath prayed long, and well, yet when he rises, it may be he cannot tell all the particulars which he begged of God. I doubt not but those prayers which contain matter in them agreeable to his usual and constant desires, and are actually attended to in the time of their use, are recorded in heaven, and there will abide to procure the blessing, and towards the accounts of eternity. But then it is to be observed, that those transient acts of devotion, or other volatile and fugitive instances of repentance, are not the proper and proportioned remedy to the evil of vicious habits. There must be something more permanent. Therefore let the penitent make no sudden resolutions, but first consider them well, and imprint them upon his spirit, and renew them often, and call them to mind constantly and at certain periods; let him use much meditation upon the matter of his repentance and remedy; and let his prayers be the same, passionate, material, alike expressed, and made the business of much of our time. For our spirit by use must be made holy, and by assiduity of reading, of praying, of meditating, and acts of self denial, be accustomed to the yoke of Jesus: for let the habit be firm as a rock, united and hard as stone, it will be broken and made soft by a continual dropping.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN VENIAL AND MORTAL SINS UNSCRIPTURAL.

EVERY sin is directly against God's law; and therefore is damnable and deadly in the accounts of the divine justice, one as well, though not so grievously, as another. For though sins be differenced by greater and less, yet their proportion to punishment is not differenced by temporal and eternal, but by greater and less in that kind which God hath threatened. Thus the indistinction of words mingles all their significations in the same common notion and formality. They were not sins at all, if they were not against a law; and if they be, they cannot be of their own nature venial, but must be liable to that punishment which was threatened in the law whereof that action is a transgression.

The law of God never threatens, the justice of God never inflicts punishment, but upon transgressors of his laws; the smallest offences are not

only threatened, but may be punished with death; therefore they are transgressions of the divine law. So St Basil argues; "the sting of death is sin;" that is, death is the evil consequent of sin, and comes in the tail of it; of every sin, and therefore no sin must be despised as if it were little. Now if every little sin hath this sting also (as it is on all hands agreed that it hath), it follows that every little transgression is perfectly and entirely against a commandment. And indeed it is not sense to say any thing can in any sense be a sin, and that it should not in the same sense be against a commandment. For although the particular instance be not named in the law, yet every instance of that matter must be meant. It was an extreme folly in Bellarmine to affirm, "that a sin that is venial by the smallness of the matter, is not perfectly against the law, because the law forbids theft indeed in the general, but does not in particular forbid the stealing of a half-penny:" for upon the same reason it is not perfectly against the law to steal three pounds nineteen shillings and three-pence, because the law in general only forbids theft, but does not in particular forbid the stealing of that sum. But what is *besides* the law, and not *against* it, cannot be a sin; and therefore to fancy any sin to be only besides the law is a contradiction; so, to walk, to ride, to eat flesh or herbs, to wear a long or a short garment, are said to be besides the law; but therefore, they are permitted and indifferent. Indifferent, I say, in respect of that law, which relates to that particular matter, and indifferent in all senses; unless there be some collateral law which may prohibit it indirectly. So for a judge to be a coachman, for a priest to be a fiddler or innkeeper, are not directly unlawful, but indirectly they are, as being against decency and public honesty or reputation, or being inconvenient in order to that end whither their calling is designed. To this sense are those words of St Paul; "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient;" that is, some things which directly are lawful, by an indirect obligation may become unfit to be done. The issue then is this; either we are forbidden to do a venial sin, or we are not. If we are not forbidden, then it is as lawful to do a venial sin as to marry, or eat flesh: if we are forbidden, then every such action is directly against God's law, and consequently fineable at the will of the supreme Judge, and if he please, punishable with a supreme anger. And to this purpose there is an excellent observation in St Austin: "There are several names in Scripture to signify our wanderings, and to represent the several degrees of sin; but carefully it is provided for, that they should be expiated with the same sacrifice;" which proves that certainly they are prevarications of the same law, offences of the same God, provocations of the same anger, and heirs of the same death: and even for small offences a sacrifice was appointed, lest men should neglect what they think God regarded not.

Every sin, even the smallest, is against charity, which is the end of the commandment. For every sin or evil of transgression is far worse than all the evils of punishment with which mankind is afflicted in this world; and it is a less evil that all mankind should be destroyed, than that God should be displeased in the least instance that is imaginable. Now if we esteem the loss of our life or our estate, the wounding our head, or the extinction of an eye, to be great evils to us, and him that does any thing of this to us, to be our enemy, or to be injurious, we are to remember that God hates every sin worse, than we can hate pain or beggary. And if a nice and a tender conscience, the spirit of every excellent person, does extremely hate

all that can provoke God to anger or to jealousy; it must be certain that God hates every such thing with a hatred infinitely greater, so great, that no understanding can perceive the vastness of it and immensity. For by how much every one is better, by so much the more he hates every sin; and the soul of a righteous man is vexed and afflicted with the inroads of his unavoidable calamities, the armies of Egypt, the lice and flies, his insinuating, creeping infirmities. Now if it be holiness in him to hate these little sins, it is an imitation of God; for what is in us by derivation, is in God essentially; therefore that which angers a good man, and ought so to do, displeases God, and consequently is against charity or the love of God. For it is but a vain dream to imagine, that because just men, such who are in the state of grace, and of the love of God, do commit smaller offences, therefore they are not against the love of God; for every degree of cold does abate something of the heat in any hot body; but yet because it cannot destroy it all, cold and heat may be consistent in the same subject; but no man can therefore say, they are not contraries, and would not destroy each other if they were not hindered by something else; and so would the smallest offences also destroy the life of grace, if they were not destroyed themselves. But of this afterward. For the present, let it be considered, how it can possibly consist with our love to God, with that duty that commands us to love him with all our heart, with all our strength, with all our might, and with all our soul; how (I say) it can be consistent with a love so extended, so intended, to entertain any thing that he hates so essentially. To these particulars I add this one consideration; that since there is in the world a fierce opinion, that some sins are so slight and little, that they do not destroy our relation to God, and cannot break the sacred tie of friendship, he who upon the inference and presumption of that opinion shall choose to commit such small sins, which he thinks to be the all that is permitted him, is not excused by that supposition: for if it be said, that he is therefore supposed to love God, because he only does those little sins which he thinks are not against the love of God, and if he did not think so, he would not do them; this excuses him not but aggravates the sin, for it is turning the grace of God into wantonness. For since that such little things are the easier pardoned, is wholly owing to God's grace and his singular goodness, he that abuses this goodness to licentiousness, makes his sin to abound, because God's grace abounds; because God is good, he takes leave to do evil, that is, to be most contrary to God. For it is certain that every man in this case hath affections for sin as formerly; indeed he entertains it not in the ruder instances because he dares not, but he does all that he dares do; for when he is taught that some certain sins are not damnable, there he will not abstain: which is a demonstration, that though he does something for fear, yet he does nothing for love.

From this it follows, that every sin, though in the smallest instance, is a turning from God and a conversion to the creature. Than this, no greater evil can be spoken of any thing; and of this all sin partakes more or less. Some few sins are direct aversions from God; so atheism, blasphemy, apostasy, resolution never to repent, and some few more: but many other very great sins are turnings from God, not directly, but by interpretation. He that commits fornication, may yet, by a direct act of understanding and a full consent, believe God to be the chiefest good: and some very vicious persons have given their lives for a good cause, and to pre-

serve their innocence in some great instance, where the scene of their proper and natural temptation does not lie. Some others there are who, out of a sincere but an abused conscience, persecute a good cause; these men are zealous for God, and yet fight against him : but because these are real enemies, and but supposed friends, therefore, by interpretation, and in effect, they turn from God and turn to the creature. A crime is styled a *delict* as if it were *derelict*, said St Austin; because in every sin God is forsaken. " They have left me the living fountain, and digged to themselves cisterns that hold no water : " so God complains by the prophet. He that prefers pleasure or profit before his duty, rejects God, but loves money and pays his devotion to interest, or ease, or sensuality. And just so does the smallest sin. For since every action hath something propounded to it as its last end, it is certain he that sins, does not do it for God, or in order to him. He that tells a lie to promote religion, or to save the life of a man, or to convert his soul, does not tell that lie for God, but tells the lie to make way for something else which is in order to God; he breaks his legs, that he may the better walk in the path of the divine commandments. A sin cannot be for God, or in order to him, no, not so much as habitually. For whatsoever can never be referred to God actually, cannot at any time be referred habitually. Since therefore the smallest sins cannot be for God, that which is not with him, is against him; if it be no way for God, it is either directly or by interpretation for pleasure or ease, or profit or pride, for something that is against him.

And it is not to be neglected, that the smaller the sin is, the less it is excusable if it be done when it is observed. For if it be small, is it not the sooner obeyed, and the more reasonably exacted, and the more bountifully repaid, when heaven is given as the price of so small a service? He that pursues his crime for a mighty purchase, to get a kingdom, or a vast estate, or an exquisite beauty, or something that is bigger than the ordinary virtues of easy and common men, hath something, not to warrant and legitimate, but to extenuate the offence by greatening the temptation. But to lose the friendship of God for a nut-shell, to save sixpence, to lose heaven with peevishness, to despise the divine laws for a nonsense insignificant vapour, and a testy pride,—hath no excuse; but it loads the sinner with the disreputation of a mighty folly. What excuse can be made for him that will not so much as hold his peace to please God? What can he do less for him? How should it be expected he should mortify his lusts, deny his ambition, part with his goods, lose an eye, cut off a hand, give his life for God, when he will not for God lose the no pleasure of talking vainly, and proudly, and ridiculously? If he will not chastise his wanton thoughts to please God, how shall he throw out his whole body of lust? If he will not resist the trifling temptations of a drinking friend to preserve his temperance, how shall he choose to be banished or murdered by the rage of a drunken prince, rather than keep the circle in their giddy and vertiginous method? The less the instance be, the direct aversion from God is also most commonly the less; but in many cases the aversion is by interpretation greater, more unreasonable, and therefore less excusable: as when the small instance is chosen by a perfect and distinct act of election; as it is in those who out of fear of hell quit the acting of their clamorous sins, and yet keep the affection to them, and consequently entertain them in thoughts and little reflections, in remembrances and fantastic images.

But if we reduce this question a little nearer to practice, and clothe it with circumstances, we shall find this account to be sadder than is usually supposed. But before I instance in the particulars, I shall premise this distinction of venial sins, which is necessary not only for the conducting of this question, but our consciences also in this whole article. The Roman schools say, that sins are venial, either by the imperfection of the agent, as when a thing is done ignorantly, or by surprise, or inadvertency: or, 2. A sin is venial by the smallness of the matter; as if a man steals a farthing or eats a little too greedily at his meal, or lies in bed half an hour longer than would become him: or, 3. A sin, say they, is venial in its whole kind, that is, such which God cannot by the nature of the thing punish with the highest punishment; such as are idle words and the like. Now first, I suppose that the two latter will be found to be both one: for either God hath not forbidden idleness or falseness, or he hath made no restraint at all upon words, but left us at liberty to talk as we please; for if he hath in this case made a law, then idle words either cannot pretend to an excuse, or it must be for the smallness of the matter; or else it must fall in with the first and be excused, because they cannot always be attended to.

Now concerning the first sort of venial sin, it is not a kind of sins, but a manner of making all sins venial, that is, apt for pardon: for by the imperfection of the agent or the act, all great sins in their matter, may become little in their malice and guilt. Now these are those which divines call sins of infirmity; and of them I shall give an account in a distinct chapter, under that title.

Concerning the second, i. e. sins venial for the smallness of the matter; I know none such. For if the matter be a particular that God hath expressly commanded or forbidden respectively, it is not little, but all one to him as that which we call the greatest. But if the particular be wholly relating to our neighbour, the smallness of the matter does not absolutely make the sin venial; for amongst us nothing is absolutely great, or absolutely little, but in comparison with something else; and if a vile person had robbed the poor woman that offered two mites to the treasury of the temple, he had undone her; a farthing there was all her substance: so that the smallness of the matter is not directly an excuse. If a man had robbed a rich man of a farthing, he had not indeed done him so great a mischief; but how if the rich man was not willing to part with his farthing, but would be angry at the injury, is it not a sin because the theft was small? No man questions but it is. It follows, therefore, that the smallness of the matter cannot make a sin venial, but where there is a leave expressly given, or justly presumed: and if it be so in a great matter, it is as little a sin as if the matter were small, that is, none at all.

But now concerning the third, which the Roman schools dream of, sins venial in their own nature, and in their whole kind; that is it which I have been disputing against all this while, and shall now farther conclude against by arguments more practical and moral. For if we consider what are those particulars, which these men call venial sins, in their whole kind and nature, we shall find that Christ and they give measures differing from each other. The catalogues of them I will take from the fathers, not that they ever thought these things to be in their nature venial (for they that think so of them are strangers to their writings: and to this purpose Bellarmine hath not brought one testimony pertinent and home to the question): but be-

cause they reckon such catalogues of venial sins, which demonstrate that they do mean sins made venial by accident, by men's infirmity, by God's grace, by pardon, by repentance, and not such which are so in their own nature. But the thing itself will be its own proof.

St Austin reckons, "vain laughter; greediness in meat; an immoderate or ungoverned appetite; perverse desires of dearness and cheapness in buying and selling commodities; the use of marriage to lustfulness and inordination; to go to law before the unbelievers; to call our brother 'fool.'"—St Jerome reckons, "jestings, anger, and injurious words."—Cæsarius Arelatensis, the bishop, reckons, "excess in eating and drinking; idle words; importune silence; to exasperate an importunate beggar; to omit the fasts of the church; sleepiness or immoderate sleeping; the use of a wife to lustfulness; to omit the visitation of the sick and of prisoners; and to neglect to reconcile them that are at variance; too much severity or harshness to our family, or too great indulgence: flattery; talkings in the church; poor men to eat too much when they are brought rarely to a good table; foreswearings (unwary perjury); slander or reproaches; rash judgment; hatred; sudden anger; envy; evil concupiscence; filthy thoughts: the lust of the eyes, the voluptuousness of the ears, or the itch of hearing; the speaking filthy words:" and indeed he reckons almost all the common sins of mankind. St Bernard reckons, "talking vainly; talking like a fool; idle or vain thoughts, words, and deeds."—These are the usual catalogues, and if any be reckoned, they must be these; for many times some of these are least consented to, most involuntary, most ready, less avoidable, of the lightest effect, of an eternal return, incurable in the whole, and therefore plead the most probably, and are the soonest likely to prevail for pardon: but yet they cannot pretend to need no pardon, or to fear no damnation. For our blessed Saviour says it of him that "speaks an angry word, that he shall be guilty of hell-fire." Now since we find such as these reckoned in the catalogue of venial sins; and St Austin in particular calls that venial to which our blessed Saviour threatened hell-fire; it is certain he must not mean that it is in its own nature venial, but damnable as any other: but it is venial, that is, prepared for pardon upon other contingencies and causes, of which I shall afterwards give account. In the mean time I consider,

When God appointed in the law expiatory sacrifices for sins, although there was enough to signify that there is difference in the degrees of sin, yet because they were to be washed away in the same blood, and, "without shedding of blood there was no remission;" they were reckoned in the same accounts of death and the divine anger. And it is manifest that by the severities and curse of the law no sin could escape. "For cursed is he that continues not in every thing written in the law to do them."—The law was a covenant of works and exact measures. There were no venial sins by virtue of that covenant; for there was no remission: and without the death of Christ we could not be eased of this state of danger. Since therefore that any sin is venial or pardonable, is only owing to the grace of God, to the death of Christ; and this death pardons all upon the condition of faith and repentance, and pardons none without it: it follows, that though sins differ in degree, yet they differ not in their natural and essential order to death. 'The man that commits any sin, dies if he repents not; and he that does repent timely and effectually dies for none. "The wages of sin is death;" of sin indefinitely, and therefore of all sin, and all death: for there is no more

distinction of sin than death; only when death is threatened indefinitely, that death is to be understood, which is properly and specifically threatened in that covenant where the death is named; as death temporal in the Law, death eternal under the Gospel.

And thus it appears in a very material instance relating to this question : for when our blessed Saviour had threatened the degrees of anger, he did it by apportioning several pains hereafter of one sort, to the several degrees of the same sin here, which he expresses by the several inflictions passed upon criminals by the houses of judgment among the Jews. Now it is observable, that ‘to the least’ of these sins Christ * assigns a punishment just proportionable to that, which the gloss of the Pharisees and the law itself did to them that committed murder, which was capital; “he shall be guilty of judgment;” he shall be guilty in the court of judgment; the assembly of the twenty-three elders; and there his punishment was death, but the gentlest manner of it, the decapitation or smiting him through with the sword; and therefore the least punishment hereafter, answering to death here, can mean no less than death hereafter. And so also was the second; he that calls ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty,—that is, shall be used as one that stands guilty in the sanhedrim, or council,—meaning, that he is to die too, but with a severer execution, by stoning to death: this was the greatest punishment by the houses of judgment; for crucifixion was the Roman manner. These two already signify hell, in a less degree, but as certainly and evidently as the third. For though we read hell-fire in the third sentence only, yet Gehenna no otherwise signifies hell, than the other two by analogy and proportionable representment. The cause of the mistake is this: when Christ was pleased to add yet a farther degree of punishment in hell to a farther degree of anger and reproach, the Jews having no greater than that of stoning by the judgment of the sanhedrim or council, he would borrow his expression from that which they and their fathers too well understood, a barbarous custom of the Phœnicians of burning children alive in the valley of Hinnom, which in succession of time the Hellenists call Gehenna, not much unlike the Hebrew word: and because by our blessed Lord it was used to signify or represent the greatest pains of hell that were spoken of in that gradation, the Christians took the word and made it to be its appellative, and to signify the state or place of the damned: just as ‘the garden of Eden’ is called ‘Paradise.’ But it was no more intended this should signify hell, than that any of the other two should. The word itself never did so before; but that and the other two were taken as being the most fearful things amongst them here, to represent the degrees of the most intolerable state hereafter; just as damnation is called death; the second death; that because we fear the first as the worst of present evils, we may be affrighted with the apprehensions of the latter. From this authority it follows; that as in the Law no sins were venial, but by repentance and sacrifice; so neither in the Gospel are they: not in their own nature, not by the more holy covenant of the Gospel, but by repentance and mortification. For the Gospel hath with greater severity laid restraint upon these minute and little particles of action and passion: and therefore if in the Law every transgression was exacted, we cannot reasonably think that the least parts of duty, which the Gospel superadded with a new and severer caution, as great and greater

* Mat. v. 22.

than that by which the Law exacted the greatest commandments, can be broken with indemnity, or without the highest danger. The Law exacted all its smallest minutes; and therefore so does the Gospel, as being a covenant of greater holiness. But as in the Law for the smaller transgressions there was an assignment of expiatory rites; so is there, in the Gospel, of a ready repentance, and a prepared mercy.

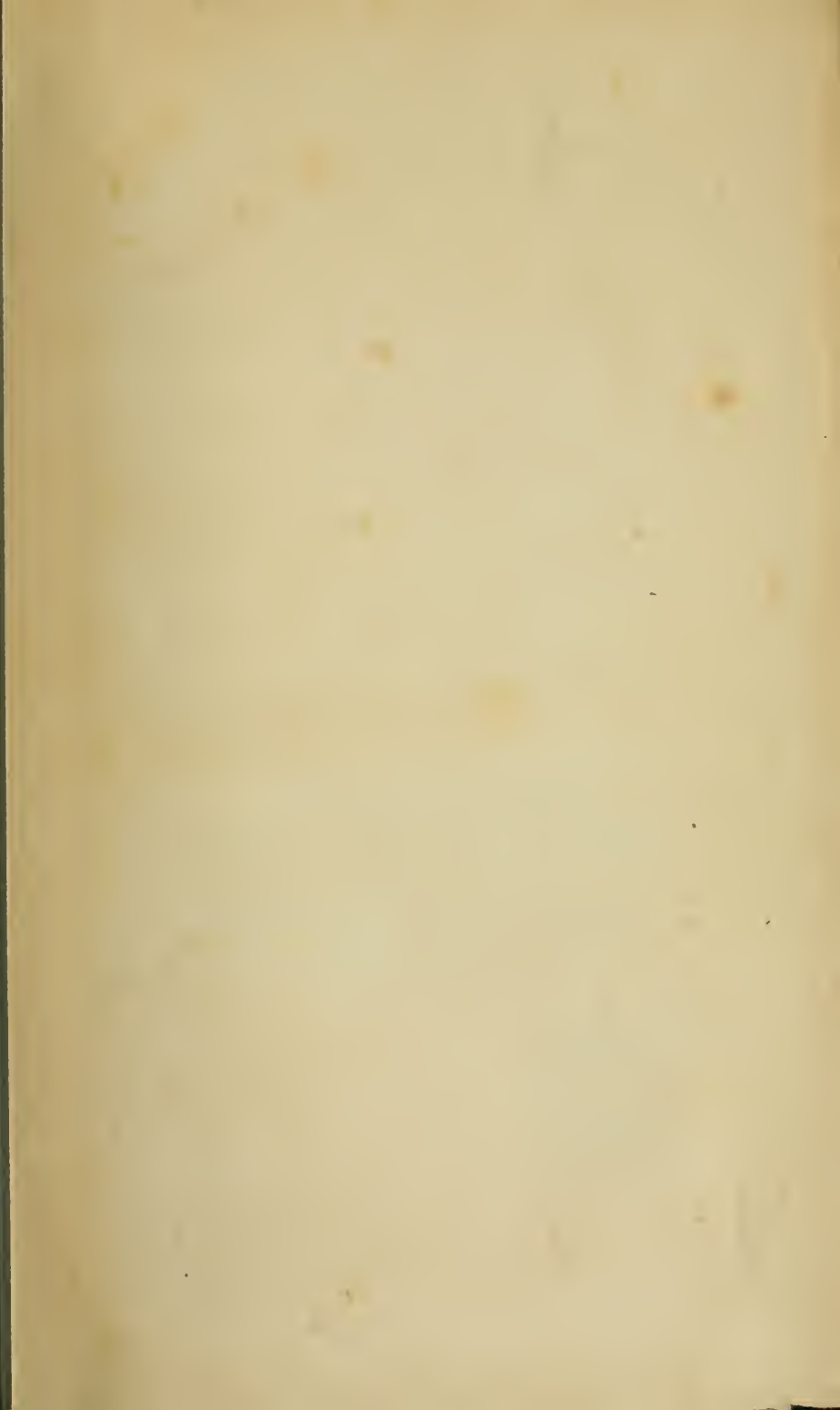
Lastly; those things which men in health are bound to avoid, those sins for which Christ did shed his most precious blood, those sins for which a dying man is bound to ask pardon, though he hopes not, or desires not to escape temporal death, certain it is, that those sins are in their nature, and in the economy or dispensation of the divine threatenings, damnable. For what can the dying man fear but death eternal? And if he be bound to repent and ask pardon even for the smallest sins which he can remember, in order to what pardon can that repentance be, but of the eternal pain to which every sin by its own demerit naturally descends? If he must repent and ask pardon when he hopes not or desires not the temporal, it is certain he must repent, only that he may obtain the eternal. And they that will think otherwise, will also find themselves deceived in this. For if the damned souls in hell are punished for all their sins, then the unpardoned venial sins are there also smarted for. But so it is, and so we are taught in the doctrine of our great Master. 'If we agree not while we are in the way, we shall be cast into the eternal prison, and shall not depart thence till we have paid the uttermost farthing.' That is, even for our smallest sins, if they be unremitted, men shall pay in hell their horrible symbol of damnation. And this is confessed on all hands: that they who fall into hell, pay their sorrows there even for all. But it is pretended, that this is only by accident, not by the first intention of the divine justice; because it happens that they are subjected in such persons, who for other sins (not for these) go to hell. Well! yet let it be considered, whether or no do not the smallest unremitted sins, increase the torments of hell in their proportion? If they do not, then they are not at all punished in hell; for if without them the perishing soul is equally punished, then for them there is no punishment at all. But if they do increase the pains, as it is certain they do, then to them properly, and for their own malignity and demerit, a portion of eternal pains is assigned. Now if God punishes them in hell, then they deserved hell; if they be damnable in their event, then they were so in their merit; for God never punishes any sin more than it deserves, though he often does less. But to say, that this is by accident, that is, for their conjunction with mortal sins, is confuted infinitely, because God punishes them with degrees of evil proper to them, and for their own demerit. There is no other accident by which these come to be smarted for in hell, but because they were not repented of; for by that accident they became mortal; as by the contrary accident, to wit, if the sinner repents worthily, not only the smallest, but the greatest also, become venial: the impenitent pays for all; all together. But if the man be a worthy penitent, if he continues and abides in God's love, he will find a mercy according to his circumstances, by the measures of God's graciousness, and his own repentance; so that by accident they may be pardoned; but if that accident does not happen, if the man be not penitent, the sins shall be punished directly, and for their own natural demerit. The sum is this:

If a man repents truly of the greater sins, he also repents of the

smallest ; for it cannot be a true repentance which refuses to repent of any ; so that if it happens, that for the smallest he do smart in hell, it is because he did not repent truly of any, greatest, nor smallest. But if it happens, that the man did not commit any of the greater sins, and yet did indulge to himself a license to do the smallest,—even, for those which he calls the smallest, he may perish ; and what he is pleased to call little, God may call great.

FINIS.

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